

HARLEM

A FORUM OF NEGRO LIFE

Vol. I

NOVEMBER, 1928

No. 1

FOR WHOM SHALL THE NEGRO VOTE?

WALTER WHITE

LUANI OF THE JUNGLE

LANGSTON HUGHES

ART OR PROPAGANDA

ALAIN LOCKE

WOOF

GEORGE S. SCHUYLER

BACK STAGE GLAMOUR

THEOPHILUS LEWIS

DEAD AND GONE

ALLISON DAVIS

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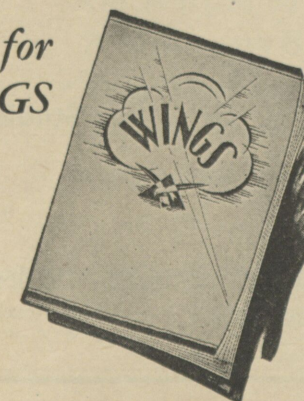
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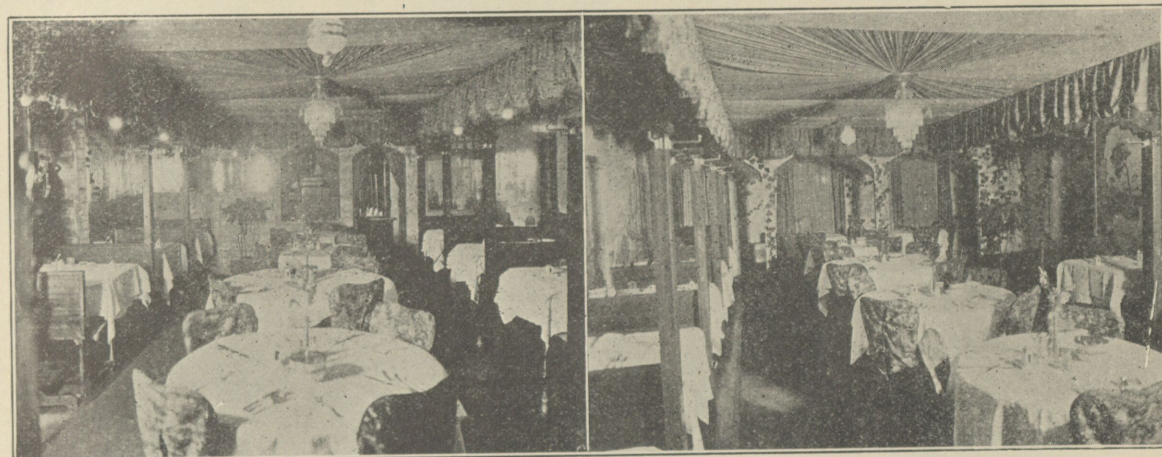
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HARLEM

A Forum of Negro Life

Volume I

NOVEMBER, 1928

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HARLEM

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NOVEMBER, 1928

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For Whom Shall the Negro Vote?

By WALTER WHITE

WILL you write an article for the first issue of HARLEM, the editor of that magazine writes me, concerning "the dilemma of Negro voters today—surveying the attitude of the old guard toward loyalty to the Republican party and the attitude of another group which is openly advocating a bolt from the traditional party of our fathers."

As fulfillment of such an assignment is being done some three weeks before election day and as the words commanded by the editor of HARLEM will hardly appear in print before the issue between Herbert Hoover and Alfred E. Smith is decided, the difficulties of such a task are apparent. Whatever may be written, therefore, which deals with the dilemma of the Negro voter in 1928 will be of importance, if any, only in so far as it may bear upon future elections in which Negroes may participate.

The reasonably detached observer of Negro activities in the 1928 presidential election can find ample material for Gargantuan laughter. Neither candidate has done any one striking thing nor uttered a single phrase which would inspire enthusiasm in Negro breasts. Those Negroes who are supporting either candidate have dredged the careers and utterances of both men seeking for some solace or some tangible material indicative of friendly or even perfunctory interest in the problems which face black men in American life today. When one reads the printed material or listens to the speeches of the Negroes supporting Smith or Hoover, one at first may be inclined to laugh, but on more sober reflection the thoughtful reader or auditor will realize how pathetic is the position of the Negro voter in American life.

Consider Al Smith, for example, who undoubtedly had a vast amount of enthusiastic support among Negro voters prior to the Democratic convention in Houston in June. These Negroes saw in Smith a new type of leader who

offered promises of Negro emancipation from slavish and increasingly unprofitable devotion to the Republican party. The Ku Klux Klan, Tom Heflin of Alabama, and all of the combined forces of bigotry, prejudice and intolerance seemed united against Al Smith because of his religion, and, more mildly, because of his Tammany Hall connection and his views on prohibition. Thoughtful Negroes imagined that they saw in Smith a champion, who would wrest control of the Democratic party from the hands of southern bourbons and vest that control once more as it was in the days of Grover Cleveland in the hands of the north and east.

Most of these hopes died aborning. The Democratic convention paid sinful tribute to the reactionary south by nominating a shrewd and Negro-hating politician as Smith's running mate. Pat Harrison of Mississippi, demanded and secured a loud voice in the conducting of the Democratic campaign. Cole Blease of South Carolina, and Carter Glass of Virginia, were not far behind their Mississippi senatorial confrere. Even these political barnacles would not have alienated so much Negro support from Smith as they did, had Smith himself had the same courage on the Negro question as he demonstrated on such issues as prohibition and religion. Not one word has he uttered which directly or indirectly would attract honest and intelligent Negro voters. A semi-official Negro organization was established to cultivate Negro support, but, laboring against the odds already mentioned, it has been woefully unsuccessful in attracting thoughtful, influential and respected Negroes to its ranks.

When one turns to the Republican side, the picture is equally, if not more, depressing. The Negro supporters of Hoover have striven valiantly to make out a case for him. The chief contentions have been the usually negative emphasis on Democratic perfidy phrased most fre-

quently, "better a passive friend than an active enemy"; and discreet playing up of Hoover's order abolishing segregation in the Department of the Interior. The discretion was doubtless due to orders from higher up because this same issue has been most viciously used against Hoover in the south, the criticism there being so virulent that white Hooverites have lustily been denying in the south that Hoover even issued such an order.

The counts against Hoover have more than offset many arguments in his favor which would appeal to the Negro. He has been as silent as Smith on the Negro question. In his speech of acceptance he timidly did declare that "equality of opportunity is the right of every American, rich or poor, foreign or native born, irrespective of sect or color." But the assertion has been shown to be as empty as the proverbial vacuum by the obvious yielding of the Republican to the lily whites of the south.

One need hold no brief for Perry Howard, the Negro Republican National Committeeman of Mississippi, or Ben Davis of Georgia, to see how thoroughly dishonest the Republican party is in its appeal for Negro support. Mrs. Mabel Walker Willebrandt, the stormy petrel of the Republican party, passed through Virginia on her way from Washington to Mississippi to participate actively in the indictment of Perry Howard for alleged sale of patronage. In that same state of Virginia the big boss of the Republican party, the swarthy white man, Bascom Slep, not only as Republican boss but as Secretary to Calvin Coolidge had dealt actively in the sale of post offices and his acts had been spread on the pages of the Congressional Record. Perry Howard, the black man, was indicted on charges of dealing in post offices; Bascom Slep, the deeply brunette white man, known to be guilty of such sales, was given a high position in the management of the Hoover campaign.

What, if any, are the chances for hope by Negroes that in 1932 their dilemma is going to be any less perplexing? The answer to that rests almost solely with the Negro himself. There are in 1928 ten states in which the Negro vote unquestionably holds or very nearly holds an absolute balance of power between the two major parties. If the Negro in those and other states refuses to bestir himself until another presidential year he is going to face not only as hopeless a choice in 1932 as he does today, but the situation is almost certain to be even more depressing. If, on the other hand, intelligent, decent, self-respecting and honest

Negro men and women start some racial house-cleaning and throw into the discard all of those Negroes, both men and women, who are no better than the average run of white politicians in selling out their honor and everything else to the highest bidder, there is going to be some lightening of the clouds which hang over the Negro voter today. I know personally of the cases of a large number of Negroes who in 1928 decided whether or not they would be Republicans or Democrats only after they had learned out of which party the largest sum could be squeezed.

A movement which has just been born in Harlem may offer an example of this new leadership. Judge Olvany, boss of Tammany Hall, during the presidential campaign, expressed in a private conversation his lack of respect for or interest in Negro voters in Harlem, declaring that out of that Negro population which approximates a quarter of a million, only twenty-three thousand were registered voters. One of the men to whom Olvany made this statement possessed more garrulity than discretion. On a street corner in Harlem this man told half a dozen persons of Olvany's statement. The next issues of various Harlem newspapers spread Olvany's words over the greater portion of their front pages.

The result served effectively to stir resentment among Negroes who had self-respect, but who also had been cursed with slothfulness. An independent movement was born, taking the name of Ferdinand Q. Morton, to build up a large body of intelligent, active Negro voters who expressed their determination to control the political destinies of the areas in which Negroes are numerous. If this movement has the courage, the honesty and the clearness of vision which is voiced in their declaration of political independence it can revolutionize not only the Negro's political situation in Harlem, but in all parts of the United States. If, on the other hand, the movement degenerates into a narrow-visioned, selfish organization it will do nothing but fasten more securely the shackles on the Negro's hands.

The call for new leaders is an old one but one which does not lose its potency by reason of the fact that Negroes have heard it ever since the Civil War. It is so obvious that it is a truism that as long as political bosses can safely start their campaigns by eliminating all consideration of the Negro because he is known to be incapable of voting any but one ticket,

(Continued on page 45)

Langston Hughes Luani of the Jungles

By LANGSTON HUGHES

"NOT another shilling," I said. "You must think I'm a millionaire or something. Here I am offering you my best hat, two shirts, and a cigar case, with two shillings besides, and yet you want five shillings more! I wouldn't give five shillings for six monkeys, let alone a mean-looking beast like yours. Come on, let's make a bargain. What do you say?"

But the African, who had come to the wharf on the Niger to sell his monkey remained adamant. "Five shillin' more," he said. "Five shillin'. Him one fine monkey!" However, when he held up the little animal for me to touch, the frightened beast opened his white-toothed mouth viciously and gave a wild scream. "Him no bite," assured the native. "Him good."

"Yes, he's good all right," said Porto Rico sarcastically. "We'll get a monkey at Burutu cheaper, anyhow. It'd take a year to tame this one."

"I won't buy him," I protested to the native. "You want too much."

"But he is a fine monkey," an unknown voice behind us said, and we turned to see a strange, weak-looking little white man standing there. "He is a good monkey," the man went on in a foreign sort of English. "You ought to buy him here. Not often you get a red monkey of this breed. He is rare."

Then the stranger, who seemed to know whereof he spoke, told us that the animal was worth much more than the native asked, and he advised me softly to pay the other five shillings. "He is like a monkey in a poem," the man said. Meanwhile the slender simian clung tightly to the native's shoulder and snarled shrilly whenever I tried to touch him. But the very wildness of the poor captured beast with the wire cord about his hairy neck fascinated me. Given confidence by the stranger, for one old hat, two blue shirts, a broken cigar case, and seven shillings, I bought the animal. Then for fear of being bitten, I wrapped the wild little thing in my coat, carried him up the gangplank of the "West Illana" and put him into an empty prune box standing near the galley door. Porto Rico and the stranger followed and I saw that Porto Rico carried a large valise, so I surmised that the stranger was a new passenger.

The "West Illana," a freight boat from New York to West Africa, seldom carried passengers other than an occasional trader or a few poor missionaries. But when, as now, we were up one of the tributaries of the Niger, where English passenger steamers seldom came, the captain sometimes consented to take on travelers to the coast. The little white man with the queer accent registered for Lagos, a night's journey away. After he had been shown his stateroom he came out on deck and, in a friendly sort of manner, began to tell me about the various methods of taming wild monkeys. Yet there was a vague far-off air about him as though he were not really interested in what he was saying. He took my little beast in his hands and I noticed that the animal did not bite him nor appear particularly alarmed.

It was late afternoon then and all our cargo for that port,—six Fords from Detroit and some electric motors,—had been unloaded. The seamen closed the hatch, the steamer swung slowly away from the wharf with a blast of the whistle and began to glide lazily down the river. Soon we seemed to be floating through the heart of a dense sullen jungle. A tangled mass of trees and vines walled in the sluggish stream and grew out of the very water itself. None of the soil of the river bank could be seen,—only an impenetrable thickness of trees and vines. Nor were there the brilliant jungle trees one likes to imagine in the tropics. They were rather a monotonous grey-green confusion of trunks and leaves with only an occasional cluster of smoldering scarlet flowers or, very seldom, the flash of some bright-winged bird to vary their hopelessness. Once or twice this well of ashey vegetation was broken by a muddy brook or a little river joining the larger stream and giving, along murky lengths, a glimpse into the further depths of this colorless and forbidding country. Then the river gradually widened and we could smell the sea, but it was almost dinner time before the ship began to roll slowly on the ocean's green and open waters. When I went into the salon to set the officers' table we were still very near the Nigerian coast and the grey vines and dull trees of the delta region.

After dinner I started aft to join Porto Rico and the seamen, but I saw the little white man seated on one of the hawser posts near the



LUANI OF THE JUNGLES
AARON DOUGLAS

handrail so I stopped. It was dusk and the last glow of sunset was fading on the edge of the sea. I was surprised to find this friend of the afternoon seated there because passengers seldom ventured far from the comfortable deck chairs near the salon.

"Good evening," I said.

"Bon soir," answered the little man.

"Vous êtes français?" I asked, hearing his greeting.

"Non," he replied slowly. "I am not French, but I lived in Paris for a long while." Then he added for seemingly no reason at all, "I am a poet, but I destroy my poems."

The gold streak on the horizon turned to orange.

There was nothing I could logically say except, "Why?"

"I don't know," he said. "I don't know why I destroy my poems. But then there are many things I don't know. . . . I live back in that jungle." He pointed toward the coast. "I don't know why."

The orange in the sunset darkened to blue.

"But why," I asked again stupidly.

"My wife is there," he said. "She is an African."

"Is she?" I could think of nothing other to say.

The blue on the horizon greyed to purple now.

"I'm trying to get away," he went on, paying no attention to my remark. "I'm going down to Lagos now. Maybe I'll forget to come back—back there." And he pointed to the jungles hidden in the distant darkness of the coast. "Maybe I'll forget to come back this time. But I never did before,—not even when I was drunk. I never forgot. I always came back. Yet I hate that woman!"

"What woman?" I asked.

"My wife," he said. "I love her and yet I hate her."

The sea and the sky were uniting in darkness.

"Why?" was again all I could think of saying.

"At Paris," he went on. "I married her at Paris." Then suddenly to me, "Are you a poet, too?"

"Why, yes," I replied.

"Then I can talk to you," he said. "I married her at Paris four years ago when I was a student there in the Sorbonne." As he told his story the night became very black and the stars were warm. "I met her one night at the Bal Bulier,—this woman I love. She was with an African student whom I knew and he told me

that she was the daughter of a wealthy native in Nigeria. At once I was fascinated. She seemed to me the most beautiful thing I had ever seen,—dark and wild, exotic and strange,—accustomed as I had been to only pale white women. We sat down at a table and began to talk together in English. She told me she was educated in England but that she lived in Africa. 'With my tribe,' she said. 'When I am home I do not wear clothes like these, nor these things on my fingers.' She touched her evening gown and held out her dark hands sparkling with diamonds. 'Life is simple when I am home,' she said. 'I don't like it here. It is too cold and people wear too many clothes.' She lifted a cigarette holder of platinum and jade to her lips and blew a thin line of smoke into the air. 'Mon dieu!' I thought to myself. 'A child of sophistication and simplicity such as I have never seen!' And suddenly before I knew it, crazy young student that I was, I had leaned across the table and was saying, 'I love you.'

"That is what he says, too," she replied, pointing toward the African student dancing gaily with a blonde girl at the other end of the room. 'You haven't danced with me yet.' We rose. The orchestra played a Spanish waltz full of Gypsy-like nostalgia and the ache of desire. She waltzed as no woman I had ever danced with before could waltz,—her dark body close against my white one, her head on my shoulder, its mass of bushy hair tangled and wild, perfumed with a jungle-scent. I wanted her! I ached for her! She seemed all I had ever dreamed of; all the romance I'd ever found in books; all the lure of the jungle countries; all the passions of the tropic soul.

"I need you," I said. 'I love you.' Her hand pressed mine and our lips met, wedged as we were in the crowd of the Bal Bulier.

"I'm sailing from Bordeaux at the end of the month," she told me as we sat in the Gardens of the Luxemburg at sunset a few days later. 'I'm going back home to the jungle countries and you are coming with me.'

"I know it," I agreed, as though I had been planning for months to go with her.

"You are coming with me back to my people," she continued. 'You with your whiteness coming to me and my dark land. Maybe I won't love you then. Maybe you won't love me,—but the jungle'll take you and you'll stay there forever.'

"It won't be the jungle making me stay," I protested. 'It'll be you. You'll be the ebony goddess of my heart, the dark princess who

saved me from the corrupt tangle of white civilization, who took me away from my books into life, who discovered for me the soul of your dark countries. You'll be the tropic flower of my heart.

"During the following days before our sailing, I made many poems to this black woman I loved and adored. I dropped my courses at the Sorbonne that week and wrote my father in Prague that I would be going on a journey south for my health's sake. I changed my account to a bank in Lagos in West Africa, and paid farewell calls on all my friends in Paris. So much did I love Luani that I had no regrets on taking leave of my classmates nor upon saying adieux to the city of light and joy.

"One night in July we sailed from Bordeaux. We had been married the day before in Paris.

"In August we landed at Lagos and came by river boat to the very wharf where you saw me today. But in the meantime something was lost between us,—something of the first freshness of love that I've never found again. Perhaps it was because of the many days together hour after hour on the boat,—perhaps she saw too much for me. Anyway, when she took off her European clothes at the Liberty Hotel in Lagos to put on the costume of her tribe, and when she sent to the steel safe at the English bank there all of her diamonds and pearls, she seemed to put me away, too, out of her heart, along with the foreign things she had removed from her body. More fascinating than ever in the dress of her people, with the soft cloth of scarlet about her limbs and the little red sandals of buffalo hide on her feet,—more fascinating than ever and yet farther away she seemed, elusive, strange. And she began that day to talk to some of the servants in the language of her land.

"Up to the river town by boat, and then we travelled for days deep into the jungles. After a week we arrived at a high clear space surrounded by bread-fruit, mango, and cocoanut trees. There a hundred or more members of the tribe were waiting to receive her,—beautiful brown-black people whose perfect bodies glistened in the sunlight, bodies that shamed me and the weakness under my European clothing. That night there was a great festival given in honor of Luani's coming,—much beating of drums and wild fantastic dancing beneath the moon,—a festival in which I could take no part for I knew none of their ceremonies, none of their dances. Nor did I understand a word of their language. I could only stand aside and look, or sit in the door of our hut and sip the

palm wine they served me. Luani, wilder than any of the others, danced to the drums, laughed and was happy. She seemed to have forgotten me sitting in the doorway of our hut drinking palm wine.

"Weeks passed and months. Luani went hunting and fishing, wandering about for days in the jungles. Sometimes she asked me to go with her, but more often she went with members of the tribe and left me to walk about the village, understanding nobody, able to say almost nothing. No one molested me. I was seemingly respected or at least ignored. Often when Luani was with me she would speak no French or English all day, unless I asked her something. She seemed almost to have forgotten the European languages, to have put them away as she had put away the clothes and customs of the foreigners. Yet she would come when I called and let me kiss her. In a far-off, strange sort of way she still seemed to love me. Even then I was happy because I loved her and could hold her body.

"Then one night, trembling from an ugly dream, I suddenly awoke, sat up in bed and discovered in a daze that she was not beside me. A cold sweat broke out on my body. The room was empty. I leaped to the floor and opened the door of the hut. A great streak of moonlight fell across the threshold. A little breeze was blowing and the leaves of the mango trees rustled dryly. The sky was full of stars. I stepped into the grassy village street,—quiet all around. Filled with worry and fear, I called, 'Luani!' As far as I could see the tiny huts were quiet under the moon and no one answered. I was suddenly weak and afraid. The indifference of the silence unnerved me. I called again, 'Luani!' A voice seemed to reply: 'To the palm forest, to the palm forest. Quick, to the palm forest!' And I began to run toward the edge of the village where a great cocoanut grove lay.

"There beneath the trees it was almost as light as day and I sat down to rest against the base of a tall palm, while the leaves in the wind rustled dryly overhead. No other noise disturbed the night and I rested there wide awake, remembering Paris and my student days at college. An hour must have passed when, through an aisle of the palm trees, I saw two naked figures walking. Very near me they came and then passed on in the moonlight,—two ebony bodies close together in the moonlight. They were Luani and the chief's young son, Awa Unabo.

"I did not move. Hurt and resentment,

anger and weakness filled my veins. Unabo, the strongest and greatest hunter of the tribe, possessed the woman I loved. They were walking together in the moonlight, and weakling that I was, I dared not fight him. He'd break my body as though it were a twig. I could only rage in my futile English and no one except Luani would understand. . . . I went back to the hut. Just before dawn she came, taking leave of her lover at my door.

"Like a delicate statue carved in ebony, a dark halo about her head, she stood before me, beautiful and black like the very soul of the tropics, a woman to write poems about, a woman to go mad over. All the jealous anger died in my heart and only a great hurt remained and a feeling of weakness.

"I am going away, back to Paris, I said."

"I'm sorry," she replied with emotion. 'A woman can have two lovers and love them both.' She put her arms around my neck but I pushed her away. She began to cry then and I cursed her in foreign, futile words. That same day, with two guides and four carriers, I set out through the jungles toward the Niger and the boat for Lagos. She made no effort to keep me back. One word from her and I could not have left the village, I knew. I would have been a prisoner,—but she did not utter that word. Only when I left the clearing she waved to me and said, 'You'll come back.'

"Once in Lagos, I engaged passage for Bordeaux, but when the time came to sail I could not leave. I thought of her standing before me naked that last morning like a little ebony statue, and I tore up my ticket! I returned to the hotel and began to drink heavily in an effort to forget, but I could not. I remained

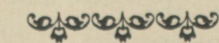
drunk for weeks, then after some months had passed I boarded a river boat, went back up the Niger, back through the jungles,—back to her.

"Four times that has happened now. Four times I've left her and four times returned. She has borne a child for Awa Unabo. And she tells me that she loves him. But she says she loves me, too. Only one thing I do know,—she drives me mad. Why I stay with her, I do not know any longer. Why her lover tolerates me, I do not know. Luani humiliates me now,—and fascinates me, tortures me and holds me. I love her. I hate her, too. I write poems about her and destroy them. I leave her and come back. I do not know why. I'm like a mad man and she's like the soul of her jungles, quiet and terrible, beautiful and dangerous, fascinating and death-like. I'm leaving her again, but I know I'll come back. . . . I know I'll come back."

Slowly the moon rose out of the sea and the distant coast of Nigeria was like a shadow on the horizon. The "West Illana" rolled languidly through the night. I looked at the little white man, tense and pale, and wondered if he were crazy, or if he were lying.

"We reach Lagos early in the morning, do we not?" he asked. "I must go to sleep. Good night." And the strange passenger went slowly toward the door of the corridor that led to his cabin.

I sat still in the darkness for a few moments, dazed. Then I suddenly came to, heard the chug, chug, of the engines below and the half-audible conversation drifting from the fo'c's'ls, heard the sea lapping at the sides of the ship. Then I got up and went to bed.



CUI BONO?

She sat all day and thought of love.
She lay all night and dreamed it.
Our romance stricken little dove
Grew truly quite anaemic.

But one day Fate was satiate
Of her continuous pleading
And sent her down a passionate
Young knight to do her heeding.

And tho directly did she know
Their hearts were truly mated,
His eagerness she thought was so. . .
And so . . . she hesitated.

"If, if," she argued helplessly,
Alighting from his carriage
To hitch hike home respectably,
"If he had offered marriage—"

"I wish I'd let him kiss me tho.
Oh, just the merest peck.
I wish—I wish—I wish, but no,
I'd lose my self-respect."

And so she sits and thinks of love.
And all night long she dreams it.
And with regret our little dove
Continues quite anaemic.

HELENE JOHNSON

Art or Propaganda?

By ALAIN LOCKE

ARTISTICALLY it is the one fundamental question for us today,—Art or Propaganda. Which? Is this more the generation of the prophet or that of the poet; shall our intellectual and cultural leadership preach and exhort or sing? I believe we are at that interesting moment when the prophet becomes the poet and when prophecy becomes the expressive song, the chant of fulfillment. We have had too many Jeremiahs, major, and minor;—and too much of the drab wilderness. My chief objection to propaganda, apart from its besetting sin of monotony and disproportion, is that it perpetuates the position of group inferiority even in crying out against it. For it leaves and speaks under the shadow of a dominant majority whom it harangues, cajoles, threatens or supplicates. It is too extroverted for balance or poise or inner dignity and self-respect. Art in the best sense is rooted in self-expression and whether naive or sophisticated is self-contained. In our spiritual growth genius and talent must more and more choose the role of group expression, or even at times the role of free individualistic expression,—in a word must choose art and put aside propaganda.

The literature and art of the younger generation already reflects this shift of psychology, this regeneration of spirit. David should be its patron saint: it should confront the Phillistines with its five smooth pebbles fearlessly. There is more strength in a confident camp than in a threatened enemy. The sense of inferiority must be innerly compensated, self-conviction must supplant self-justification and in the dignity of this attitude a convinced minority must confront a condescending majority. Art cannot completely accomplish this, but I believe it can lead the way.

Our espousal of art thus becomes no mere idle acceptance of "art for art's sake," or cultivation of the last decadences of the over-civilized, but rather a deep realization of the fundamental purpose of art and of its function as a tap root of vigorous, flourishing living. Not all of our younger writers are deep enough in the sub-soil of their native materials,—too many are pot-plants seeking a forced growth according to the exotic tastes of a pampered and de-

cadent public. It is the art of the people that needs to be cultivated, not the art of the coteries. Propaganda itself is preferable to shallow, truckling imitation. Negro things may reasonably be a fad for others; for us they must be a religion. Beauty, however, is its best priest and psalms will be more effective than sermons.

To date we have had little sustained art unsubsidized by propaganda; we must admit this debt to these foster agencies. The three journals which have been vehicles of most of our artistic expressions have been the avowed organs of social movements and organized social programs. All our purely artistic publications have been sporadic. There is all the greater need then for a sustained vehicle of free and purely artistic expression. If HARLEM should happily fill this need, it will perform an honorable and constructive service. I hope it may, but should it not, the need remains and the path toward it will at least be advanced a little.

We need, I suppose in addition to art some substitute for propaganda. What shall that be? Surely we must take some cognizance of the fact that we live at the centre of a social problem. Propaganda at least nurtured some form of serious social discussion, and social discussion was necessary, is still necessary. On this side; the difficulty and shortcoming of propaganda is its partisanship. It is one-sided and often prejudging. Should we not then have a journal of free discussion, open to all sides of the problem and to all camps of belief? Difficult, that,—but intriguing. Even if it has to begin on the note of dissent and criticism and assume Menckonian scepticism to escape the commonplace of conformity. Yet, I hope we shall not remain at this negative pole. Can we not cultivate truly free and tolerant discussion, almost Socratically minded for the sake of truth? After Beauty, let Truth come into the Renaissance picture,—a later cue, but a welcome one. This may be premature, but one hopes not,—for eventually it must come and if we can accomplish that, instead of having to hang our prophets, we can silence them or change their lamentations to song with a Great Fulfillment.



DEAD AND GONE

ALLISON DAVIS

"Son, I'm pas' eighty, but I still
Mus' grub an' swing er hoe
Ter keep my roof. I sometime fill
My pipe, and think of dem so
Long daid here, what use' ter be
'Fraid of dis berr'in' groun' befo'
Deaf stopped der fears an' slav'ry.

"Den mem'ries lak de mo'nful ho'n
Of hunters come down on me
Ter throdde hope—Dese hab no stone,
But I doan need er mark' fur
All dat pas' is rooted ter our bone."

Lak my soul, sun a-burnin'.

Fallin'.

Lak my soul, moon 'll be droppin'

Blood-red

Behin' de berr'in' groun'

Unseen ter her settin'

Lonely, neah her time.

"De ol' folks an' deir hoodoo-doctor,
Daddy Jim wuz glad ter shout
Deir lesson time dat little Brer
Wuz th'own here in de co'ner wifout
Mo'ners, frenzied by er mocc'sin's bite
An' daid in fury. Brer wux 'bout
Our dancin'est boy an' fust ter fight,
Or sing de songs he allus made
Fur break-downs. Late ev'ry night
In quarters miles aroun' he laid
De seed fur Massa's reapin',
Sons sowed fur slav'ry.

"Brer paid,
De ol' folks said, fer all his creepin'
Time dat de rice swamp turned his breaif
Ter fever. He kep on leapin'
Tell de mocc'sin let him dance fur Deaf."

Lonely ez de listener, Lawd,

Still listener, Lawd.

Fur de long cry frum de houn'

Lonesome when I'm thinkin', Lawd,

Of dat stoneless burr'in' groun';

Know I'm ready's ever goin' ter be

Ready's I'm ever goin' ter be.

"She wuz de putties' an' bes'
Beloved of all our gals, but Bef
Wuz kep' ter eaze young Massa's nes'.
Dose in de fiels all wished her place,
Tell Massa sent her home ter res'."

*Glide, glide, glide,
Water lily's white, wild rose red,
Missis singin' ' by my side,
'Gaters playin' daid.*

*Singin' softly ter de sweep,
Crane an' bittern cryin';
Missis sings her chile ter sleep,
Knows my own chile's sighin'.*

*Ben' yo' back, boy, pull dis one fur home;
Water cryin' lonely ez de sun flames low,
River rollin' out'ard ter de great sea foam,
Ben' a-gen it, boy, pull dis one fur home.*

"Maum Sue was broken by de pace
Dey set her in de rows of co'n,
Between chile-bearin's; but her face
Wuz strong an' taut, firm lak de tone
Struck from tight banjers. Ev'ry year
She gave new birth, an' laid her moan
At night in all her pangs, ter fear
De sick-house wif its ha'nts unlaid.

"Sue loved her own enough ter fight
Fur dem an' try ter cook an' sew
When she had lef' de fiels at night.
She thought de weren't a speck below
White Missis' babes, an' wondered how
Bef could love white chillun so."

*Oh, go 'long, ox,
Down de row;
Dawn ter sunset
We gots ter go,
You an' me,
In dis row.*

*Co'n, co'n, co'n an' cotton
Till I die;
Walkin' in de mo'nin' dew,
Singin' ter de sky,
Lovin' you. Lawd,
Lovin, you.*

"When I see some u' us shrink an' cow
An' 'spise our blood-won liberty,
My min' goes back ter Sam'el Pryer,
Massa's foreman fur us, who we
Knew had got from Massa his desiah
Fur knowledge, with its power an'
Punishment. His hopes like fish
Burnt in his eyes, tell all wuz spen'.

His stren'th wuz crushed, while weakness
Made us strong.

"In youth he had ben
Whupped, when he had done his bes'
Ter reach de no'th, an' torn by
Dogs, till Massa saved his son, jes
Fur his price. Dough he would never cry,
De white folks every day could see
In him what dey denied—man's high
Immo'tal soul in slav'ry.

"De songs he make brought him some

Peace, songs dat gives us heavenly
Calm, an' far-off hopes fur freedom."

*When de mo'nin' trumpets soun',
I'll be sleepin' in de mountain,
Lak Moses, Lawd!
My ol' Mammy say day foun'
Her by de Mountains of de Moon,
Slavers, my Lawd!
So, doan burry me in dis burr'in' groun'
Where de skeeters sing deir tune,
But berry me in a mountain, Lawd,
Lak Moses.*



THE YOUNG VOICE CRIES

To Alice Dunbar Nelson

MAE COWDERY

Can you not hear us?
Or are you deaf
To our pleading . . .
Can you not see us?
Or are you blind
To our weeping . . .
We yearn to hear
The beauty of truth
From your lips.
As rain drips
From trees
On the budding flowers
'Neath its feet.
We look to see
The naked loveliness
Of things . . . thru your eyes
A barren cliff . . . made
A crimson rise
Of earth's breast
Against the sky!

But
We must be the roots
Of the tree
And push up alone
Thru earth
Rocky with prejudice
And foul with smirking
Horrors . . .
Until at last
We thrust our rough virile
Bodies into the sun
And lift verdant arms in prayer
That we might drip soft rain
On the budding flowers
'Neath our feet.

And when we look
To see the naked loveliness
Of things
There is only a barren cliff
Veiled in ugly mists
Of dogmas and fear.
But we will send our singing into
The wind . . . and blow the mists away
That those who still are in the valley
May see it . . . A crimson rise
Of earth's breast against the sky!

O! You who bore us in pain and joy
To whom God entrusted our souls . . .
Be not deaf to our pleading
Nor blind to our silent weeping!
Look not down in frowning anger!
Else tired of futile tears . . .
We blaze a new path into depths you
Cannot enter . . . and only from afar
Will you see the naked loveliness of things
And the simple beauty of truth
To which time has blinded and defended
you!

The young voice cries
For the pagan loveliness.
Of a moon
For the brazen beauty
Of a jazz song . . .
The young voice
Is hushed
In silent prayer
At beauty's shrine . . .

Holes

ROY DE COVERLY

HE was not beautiful, but God had
given her eyes. No, I lie. God had
taken two holes—bottomless, black holes—and
in them He had cast with a prodigal hand, that
with which He savors His cosmos. Then He
had filled those holes with the ink with which
He draws the storm-clouds on the canvas of the
skies, and, pleased with His work, had dropped
in two moons, one in each.

People stared, agape, and said that her eyes
were marvellous. But they were not eyes. I
knew better.

As if to atone for the sweet, black misery of
these holes, her other features were plain. No,
they were homely. No, they were ugly. But
that did not matter, for one could not see them.
The black radiance from those sinister holes
over-shadowed all her face. Still, I knew that
her mouth was terrible. I knew that it was like
the broken mouth of an obscene, leering gar-
goyle, but with perfect ivory teeth that laughed
in one's face. I knew, because I had often felt
those edged pearls laughing at me when I was
struggling to keep my head above the pools of
ink that filled the black holes.

Such people should not be. But then, she
was not a person, but an ironic, cruel enchan-
tress, who did not yet know where to find her
wand.

But this was not all. God had taken desire-
stuff—plenty of it—and woven it into silken
strands; then He had dropped it into the ink
in the holes and forgotten it for a thousand
years. He then had taken an imp—oh, yes,
God sometimes employs Satan's children—and
placed him to live forever in this desire-stuff.
He crowned her head with it, and also placed
it where He places eyelashes and eyebrows on
His other creatures.

People said that her hair was wonderful.
They lied. It was not hair. It was desire-stuff
with a grinning imp living among its strands.

I first saw her in a gin-mill. I had gone
there because I wanted to look upon ugly things,
and to hear ugly sounds. I have what one
might call spells, sometimes. I am a painter.

She sat alone at a table, drinking gin, which
she poured from a flat, blue-cloudy bottle. She
was almost drunk, but that night she never
seemed to fall entirely under the influence. Her
clothes were shabby, and they seemed none too

clean. There was a ladder on one of her stock-
ings, and her shoes were run over.

I sat across the room from her, ordered
whiskey, then looked in her direction. She
raised the lids that had half-covered the holes,
and I pitched, head foremost, into their bottom-
less, ink-filled depths. At that moment the imp
that lived in the strands of the desire-stuff
laughed. I heard his dry, creaky snicker, and
there was no blood in my face for many sec-
onds. Then the moons that floated in the ink
glimmered for a moment, and I knew that her
teeth laughed at me through the broken, leering
cleft that was her mouth.

I knew that I must paint her, and I prayed
to the God that had fashioned her to keep me
from drowning in the inky perdition of those
holes. I did not talk to her. One cannot talk
when one's throat is full of black God's-ink,
and one struggles to keep from sinking in bot-
tomless holes with moons floating in them. I
waited, using my drink sparingly, because I was
afraid. One does not become drunk—

Presently she rose. With an effort I raised
my shoulders above the surface of the ink and
placed my arms across the brink of the holes.
I should have raised myself higher, but the imp
stirred, and his dry hiccough tumbled across
the space that separated us and rolled up against
my face. My arms weakened, and I spat out
the ink that filled my mouth when I sank again.
Storm-ink, God's ink.

So, when she went, she carried me with her.
Diana, had she seen her walk to the door of
the place, through the lewd stares of intoxi-
cated men, would have shot an arrow through
her in jealousy.

I followed her to a lobsouse tenement, and
mounted the steps into a filthy hall-way. She
stopped and turned to face me. The moons
had sunk deep into the depths of the holes, and
the imp was silent. "Two dollars," she mut-
tered, and her mouth was horrible while her
perfect ivory teeth laughed in my face. The
imp was silent. There was ink in my mouth,
black God's ink, thick and viscous. I tried to
speak, and the sound of my voice was strange
to my ears. "Come to my apartment," I said.
"You may stay as long as you want. It is quite
comfortable."

There were ripples on the surface of the ink,
and the imp was peeping out at me, with a

strand of desire-stuff caught in his little yellow teeth. The moons were still sunken. Silent, she turned and led the way to the door. I was glad she did not speak.

It was about three o'clock in the morning. There was a pale, watery moon whose face was scarred with strings of ragged clouds, dark-tinted with ink—God's-ink. The streets were deep gorges with black heaving sides that closed in on one's consciousness, and stained one's very soul with the black God's-ink with which they dripped. The hoarse roar of a passing taxicab startled me for a moment, then I hailed it, opened the door and motioned her to enter. I could not speak, and I was very thankful that she did not.

I sat beside her, cold and hot by turns, as we drove to my rooms. I longed to turn my head and look at the broken gargoyle's mouth, but I knew that the beady, black eyes of the imp peeped out at me from the depths of the desire-stuff, and that if I moved, his dry hiccup would smite my face with its hoarse revilings.

She walked into my studio, and stood in the middle of the room, a creature of blackness with the body of Diana; a fiercely vindictive enchantress enwrapped in a cloud of evil; a fascinating, grimly beautiful Circe, with the mouth of a gargoyle fashioned by a raving, half-devil of a stone-cutter. God, I was her slave. But I would paint her; oh, how I would paint her.

Daylight seemed aeons away. My fingers itched for the brushes. I knew that when I commenced to paint I would no longer be afraid. The imp might thrust his head out of the desire-stuff and leer at me, but I would only laugh in his face and blend the yellow of his teeth, the vermilion of his mouth into my pigments and paint them into the clouds of desire-stuff that would float on my canvas. But I must wait for the light, and, in the meantime, we would sleep.

Daylight streamed into the room with a yellow, luminous burning. A broad, dusty ray settled on the dais and spilled burnt gold on the black draperies. With the morning came reassurance. Black God's-ink in the daylight would surely be only black God's-ink, and not a seething styx of evil boilings. I was sure I could paint her, and I would take advantage of the yellow radiance that filled the room.

Three days later I struggled to the surface of the ink, belched a burning, choking stream of it from my straining throat, and looked at what I had done. Her head was on my canvas. Evil, at once seductive and repellant, her face was there. I had drawn it well. The blue-

black shadow cast by the desire-stuff I had painted superbly; the broken cleft of a gargoyle-mouth laughed at me in perfect counterfeited, but,—God help me—I could not paint the holes.

I had tried, fighting madly to clear from my eyes the cloggings of that cursed ink, to draw them in my picture. They were bottomless, black holes of swirling God's-ink—they had no shape. How could I draw what had no shape? Frantic, I had seized a brush, and with black paint, and shades of yellow, of green, of blue, I had tried to imprison their bitter-sweet malevolence on my canvas. I had failed. I could not see to paint them. The moons glistened and dazzled my sight, and then I would sink into the black, surging God's-ink. I could not paint those holes.

In the moment of realizing my failure, I realized also that I must paint them. If, after limning their sweetly evil radiance on my canvas, I sank and drowned in their inky perdition, I would not care. But I must paint them. I would not be foiled by the eyes of a creature of the streets; a common prostitute of a lobsouse tenement; an ignorant, evil-cloaked Circe. But I knew she was none of these. She was a glorious caprice of an all-powerful Creator; a colossal satire, superbly carved in flesh by the omnipotent Sculptor; a Venus, endowed in a moment of levity with the eyes of a Medusa. I was her slave, and she was necessary to my further existence.

A week later, my canvas held a gloriously painted mask. I knew that no painter could have done better work. Something had possessed me. But where the eyes should be were stark, empty spaces that were almost as terrible as the ink-filled, moon-inhabited holes that should have been painted there. As I dropped my brushes in sheer exhaustion, I heard the derisive cackle of the imp in the desire-stuff, and I knew that I was drowning fast in inky deepness.

The whisky that I had been drinking continuously had shattered my nerves. My hands trembled. I would never paint again. But neither would any other misguided artist try to paint her.

That night, as she and her loathsome imp slept, I strangled her with my shaking, paint-spattered hands.

I must have fallen into a stupor of drunkenness and exhaustion. When next I was conscious of my surroundings, it was late evening. The bit of sky I could see from my windows

(Continued on page 45)

Woof

GEORGE S. SCHUYLER

"**A**H WANT you people to understand that Ah'm First Sergeant of 'H' Company." Thus William Glass, Top Sergeant, veteran of the Spanish American War and the Philippine Insurrection, proud possessor of seven "Excellent" certificates of discharge from the U. S. Army and a non-commissioned officer for nearly twenty years. It was during my first meal with the company that I thus heard the "sound off." Just re-enlisted, and knowing of the reputation the company had for rigid discipline, I had come to it as a change from a rather happy-go-lucky or "ragtime" outfit in another battalion. It was said all over the regiment that if you could "make the time" in "H" Company, you could do so anywhere. Such organizations have a certain fascination. They put a fellow on his mettle. It is something of an adventure, this business of seeing how long you can stay out of the guardhouse.

Woof, as Glass was nicknamed by his men, was a Kentuckian of medium height, the color of chocolate; stocky, with powerful shoulders and arms, and short sturdy legs. He had a square head, determined jaw and little piggish eyes that smoldered from under heavy brows and corrugated forehead, while his close-cropped mustache hid a hard, stern mouth. Though generally hated by the men because of the rigid discipline he maintained, yet he was feared and respected. He knew his duty thoroughly, and what was worse for the incompetent's, he knew everybody else's. He could tell every one just what was his particular duty, and he never lost an opportunity to do so. There was just one way to do a thing, and that was according to "The Book." Thus there was never any debate about what was right. Always his counsel was "What does the regulations say?"

In most companies the departure of the commissioned officers from the vicinity of the barracks is the signal for a let-up in tension and a certain tolerance toward minor infractions; but not so in *that* company. As long as Woof was about—and he always *was* about—it was just the same as if the Colonel, the Major, the Captain and the Lieutenants were there. Any infraction of rules or violation of orders, no matter how slight, was reported religiously and with great accuracy to the Company Commander. It was the custom in some "ragtime"

companies, after an unusually arduous field exercise, to march back to the barracks and scatter to the gun racks after a perfunctory "dismissed" from the weary Top Soldiers. None of that for Woof. No matter how tired the men might be from "Chasing Will" (an expression from the command, "Fire at Will"); no matter how their throats and eyes might be filled with the red, volcanic dust of the Hawaiian roads, Woof followed the regulations. "Company, Attention. Squads right, march. Compan-e-e, halt. Port, arms. Inspection, arms. Now you people, etc., etc., dismissed!"

Everyday after First Sergeant's Call, when the Top Soldiers of the regiment repaired to headquarters for Morning Reports and new orders, Woof returned immediately to the company, entered the mess hall and invariably interrupted the midday meal to deliver a lecture. One could always be sure that even if there were no orders from headquarters, there would be some from him. Striding to the center of the mess hall, he would startle the men in the midst of their "chow" by loudly blowing "attention" upon his whistle. Then he would "sing the blues" for at least five minutes. There had been some infraction of rules, the lawns were not being carefully policed, the beds were not being properly lined for inspection, some of the men had soiled mosquito bars, the barracks were "filthy" (meaning that he had probably found a couple of match stems lying around), there was too much noise in the barracks after Tattoo, and non-commissioned officers were not properly performing their duties, or any of a hundred other complaints. Always the foreword and afterword ran something like this: "Ah want you people to understand that Ah'm First Sergeant of 'H' Company, and Ah'm gonna run 'H' Company. You people either gotta do right or face the consequences. Ah'm gettin' sick and tired tellin' you people the same thing every day. This ain't no summer resort; you gotta soldier here. There's gotta be more pep on that parade ground, too; Ah'm gettin' sick and tired of seein' people that call themselves soldiers comin' out to drill and draggin' round like a whore after a hard Saturday night."

It was "H" Company that was the best drilled. It was "H" Company that had the largest number of expert riflemen, sharpshoot-

ers and marksmen. It was "H" Company that had the most quiet and orderly mess hall, recreation room and barracks. It was "H" Company that held the straightest line on parade. It was "H" Company that had the largest number of men depositing part of their monthly pay. It was "H" Company that had the cleanest equipment. It was "H" Company that won tent pitching contests. And it was "H" Company that had the smallest number of drunks the morning after pay day. You couldn't gamble there and you'd better not be caught bringing liquor into the barracks. It was a company, run as the big red-faced Captain from Tennessee used to say, "According to Hoyle." And Woof was as exacting on himself as on the other men. He was always immaculate; his room was always ready for inspection; he knew his drill thoroughly; he never made mistakes in his reports and duty rosters; he was never late on or absent from a formation, and, as was quite fitting, he was an Expert Rifleman and the best pistol shot in the company.

And yet this height of military perfection was not appreciated by the majority of his men. To repeat, they hated him. There was hardly a member of the outfit, private or non-commissioned officer, who would say a good word for him. On one occasion some of the rougher element plotted to plant a bomb under the orderly room. At another time an undiscovered enemy fired a ball cartridge at him during the annual manoeuvres. The most delightful pastime to large numbers of the privates was to lie on their bunks after drill and talk of what they would do to Woof if they ever caught him "on the outside," *i. e.*, in civil life. The punishments they proposed ran all the way from blackjacking to decapitation.

Once, a tall, black, evil-looking Negro from Florida, goaded to desperation by the rigid discipline, sat down and wrote a long anonymous letter to the Secretary of War protesting against the "tyranny" existing in the company. In due time the letter was returned to the Company Commander through the usual "military channels," decorated with a dozen indorsements. Woof was furious and set about to discover the culprit. An excellent judge of men, he pondered only a short while before he reduced the suspects to three, all of whom were pretty well schooled, among them being the private from Florida. Two or three days later he casually notified the three to report to the orderly room. Upon arrival, he artfully informed them that the Company Commander had decided to have a man in training to take

the place of the Company Clerk in the event of sickness, death or dismissal, and that he had chosen them as the three most likely candidates. It would, of course, be necessary he said, for him to submit samples of their work to the Captain. Accordingly he had all three to do various examples in arithmetic and to write sample letters. When the three had departed he compared their handwriting with that on the troublesome anonymous letter. Soon he emitted a gloat of triumph, and rushing to the telephone, requested the Captain to come down immediately. The Captain arrived and the gentleman from Florida was confronted with the two letters. Next day he was courtmartialled by Old Tremble, the summary court officer and given a short sentence in the guard house. He preceded Woof from the Summary Court room and as that worthy came along to deliver his usual noonday lecture, he leaped at him with a drawn knife. With great agility, Woof hurtled a low fence, sped across "H" Company's velvety lawn closely pursued by the irate private, and leaped upon the porch where an ice axe leaned against the wall. Gratefully he seized this respectable weapon and immediately turned the tables. Instead of serving a couple of months, the letter writer served several years.

Woof would brook no rivalry. Aspirants for his job were squelched or got rid of in numerous ways. If a non-commissioned officer had a better education than Woof, which was not infrequently the case, he was viewed with suspicion. Even if the more intellectual soldier was not seeking Woof's job, that worthy was still suspicious. It happened once that a very light-colored man, nicknamed Lily-White, a college graduate and former clergyman who had been corporal and company clerk for a long time, was rather suddenly appointed Supply Sergeant. This was a very responsible position having to do with the food and equipment of the company. Woof didn't like that at all. Lily-White was now next in importance to him. Moreover, he was a "yallah nigger." Nearly all of Woof's non-commissioned officers were very obviously Negroes because he was the one that recommended them to the Captain for appointment, and without his endorsement, it was next to impossible to get a non-commissioned officer's warrant. Only great necessity would cause him to recommend a "yallah nigger." Well from the time the new Supply Sergeant was appointed, Woof carried on continuous warfare against him, and it wasn't always above board, either. Finally, the relations between them be-

came so strained that it drew the attention of Sniff-snuff, as the Captain was nicknamed because of his nasal catarrh. He tried to patch up the difference, but to no avail. Finally the octaroon sergeant was got rid of by the fortuitous circumstances of promotion to Battalion Sergeant Major. A darker man of more limited intellectual gifts was appointed in his stead, and Woof was happy once more.

He was always "taking the joy out of life." For example, there was the incident at Waianae whence we had hiked from our barracks. These two points are only about nine miles apart across a volcanic mountain ridge and connected by a military road that winds through the windswept Kole Kole Pass. On this occasion, however, the company had marched by a circuitous route; through dusty pineapple plantations and vast seas of sugar cane, around the end of the mountain chain and thence up the coast to the little plantation town. It was a journey of well over thirty miles in the tropical sun, and there were no trees to shade the tired column enroute. It goes without saying that the men, burdened with full field equipment, caked with dust and wet with perspiration, were terribly weary. The sun was dipping into the Pacific as they trudged into camp.

In many companies after such an arduous day, the buying of a little strong drink from the wholesaler liquor house hard by would have been winked at by those in authority. Not so in "H" Company. Despite his weariness, Woof was, as ever, on the alert. This evening several of the prominent liquorterians, including Big Fairy, Whiskey, Bear, Squareface and Dip, chipped in enough money to purchase a huge demijohn of dago red and a quart of elephant gin. Knowing Woof, they did not bring their cargo in through the gate of the pasture in which the company was camped, but attempted to smuggle it in by way of a field of waving sugar cane that bordered on the rear. The strategy was eminently successful. The whole gang was bagged along with the precious liquor and placed under close arrest. With a chuckle of triumph, Woof retired for the night.

What annoyed the men more than anything else was the fact that there was no way to "get anything" on Woof. He didn't drink, didn't smoke, didn't gamble and didn't run after women, although his wife, whom he well cared for, was far away in Kentucky. He was not a victim of any of the sexual vices to which single men in barracks often fall heir, and he read his Bible every night. As a tall, black, sardonic private known for his wisdom as Dip (short for

The Diplomat), used to say, "How the hell can you get anything on a man like that—he ain't human." Only once did Woof fall from grace, and then only the Captain's "Dog Robber" (servant) and I knew about it. This "Dog Robber," quite accurately nicknamed Handsome, had several comely lady friends in Honolulu, among whom was a Portuguese charmer named Marie. Thinking to make himself solid with the First Sergeant, he conceived the brilliant idea of arranging a liaison between the two. At first Woof was indifferent to these blandishments, but after considerable urging from both of us, coupled with glowing descriptions of the Caucasian maid's beauty, he decided to pay a visit to town. As he almost never went on pass, his going occasioned much comment and surmise.

After two days he returned, radiant and enthusiastic, and confided to me the highly satisfactory result of his mission. "Dog Robbers" in other outfits got special privileges such as exemption from certain formations and often from guard duty, but not in "H" Company. It had, therefore, been the desire to get some of these privileges that had impelled Handsome to introduce Woof to his girl. Accordingly, the next morning after that gentleman's return, Handsome absented from Reveille. But he suffered bitter and immediate disillusionment, for, after receiving the report of his squad leaders, Woof turned to the Officer of the Day and snapped out, "'H' Company, one private absent."

Nor could even close friendliness stand between Woof and his duty. Once his company clerk and confidant, somehow gained the erroneous impression that Woof might ignore minor violations on his part. But he was soon disillusioned. Returning off pass in town one day, this young man brought along a quart of Johnny Walker. The company being on police and guard duty, there was no one around the barracks except a couple of fellow non-commissioned officers. Together they consumed the Scotch, and, when the bottle yielded no more, the clerk glided to one of the windows, glanced carefully up and down, and then thrust the "dead soldier" into a trash box on the porch. Alas, he had reckoned without Sergeant Glass, who always seemed to be everywhere. This time he happened to be standing in the door of the orderly room, looking down the 200-foot veranda.

Next morning when the clerk went to the office to do some work before drill time, the empty bottle sat on Woof's desk and that

worthy was wearing a look of triumph. The clerk's heart sank. When Sniff-snuff came in after drill, Woof related the story, dwelling with great emphasis on the fact that the corporal had "eased" the bottle down into the trash box instead of nonchalantly tossing it in as an innocent man would have done. The clerk, a smart fellow, adroitly lied out of it to the satisfaction of the Old Man, but much to Woof's disgust. Numerous times afterwards when Woof thought the clerk was off his guard he would ask with a clumsy attempt to be jocular, "Now didn't you really have that bottle of liquor that day?" But the man knew him too well to confess.

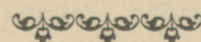
If Woof had been a coward as well as a martinet, it is doubtful whether his men would have hated him so, though they might well have respected him less. But the man was brave as a lion. One Saturday morning before the weekly inspection when the entire company was busy cleaning rifles, brushing equipment, lining beds, arranging trunks, folding blankets, shining shoes and putting buttons in freshly laundered khaki coats, a man went insane. He had concealed about him a clip of ball cartridges. These he shoved into the magazine of his Springfield and began firing indiscriminately in the crowded barracks. At the first shot everybody started in alarm. At the second shot the company deserted the building via windows and doors. Then Woof came on the scene. His little eyes red with anger, his lips drawn back in Rooseveltian style, exposing his magnificent teeth, he came running down the veranda, the lather streaming from one side of his face. "Why don't some of you people stop that man?" he breathlessly scolded. "Why don't you stop him," somebody yelled from under the barracks. Woof did. Leaping through the door nearest to the lunatic, he snatched the loaded rifle from his hands as the third shot was fired and knocked him unconscious with the rifle butt. Then, after the ambulance had taken the fellow to the Post Hospital, Woof yelled down through the barracks: "All right! You people hurry up and get ready for inspection!"

Another time, the company barber, crazed from drinking Bay Rum cocktails, locked himself in his shop, and, surrounded with his large assortment of razors, defied anyone to enter. The assembled crowd held back. Then two non-commissioned officers lunged against the

door, broke the lock and prepared to rush the fortress—but they also stopped short. Inside the sagging door stood the erstwhile peaceful barber, a wild look in his booze-reddened eyes and a bright blade in his hand. The non-coms fell back in respect. At this juncture Woof rushed up. Thrusting the crowd aside, he lunged forward and almost broke the barber's jaw with his huge fist, saying at the same time, "Whatta you *mean*; causin' all this disturbance?"

When the government finally decided to join the crusade for democracy in April, 1917 orders came to the regiment for some eighty non-commissioned officers to be sent to Uncle Sam's jim crow officers' training camp. When the contingent left in June, Woof was in it. Four months later he became a captain in the National Army. No one strutted more proudly. No officer looked more imposing. Then he went on leave to visit his wife in Louisville and immediately created a disturbance there. White soldiers avoided him to escape saluting a black officer. This dodge was not lost on Woof. One day two Nordic sergeants deliberately turned their backs on him and gazed unconcernedly into a shop window. In a fury, Woof accosted them, bawled them out and made them salute. "You people ain't salutin' me," he informed them fiercely. "You're salutin' my rank." The incident was observed by hundreds of outraged Nordic passersby. A great hubbub arose and the newspapers carried considerable comment. Everything blew over, however, when an old Confederate general spoke out and said that the captain had done his duty. That was sufficient for any Southern town.

You probably expect to hear that Woof died in France leading his company over the top. He didn't. When his thirty years in harness were almost up, he resigned his commission, re-enlisted, and was retired on First Sergeant's pay. Learning that his wife had violated her marriage vows while he was busy soldiering, he promptly divorced her, married again and settled down in an Arizona town. In his letters to me he dwelt at length on the ease of his life. "I've got the Bear muzzled," he wrote once, and then went on to tell how he liked to lie abed mornings, with the rain beating on the window panes, and "spell out" the newspapers while his buxom wife was getting breakfast. Then the letters stopped. Soon afterward a mutual friend wrote to me that Woof had been killed by a Ford.



EDITORIAL

IN the past there have been only a few sporadic and inevitably unsuccessful attempts to provide the Negro with an independent magazine of literature and thought. Those magazines which have lived throughout a period of years have been organs of some philanthropic organization whose purpose was to fight the more virulent manifestations of race prejudice. The magazines themselves have been pulpits for alarmed and angry Jeremiahs spouting fire and venom or else weeping and moaning as if they were either predestined or else unable to do anything else. For a while this seemed to be the only feasible course for Negro journalists to take. To the Negro then the most important and most tragic thing in the world was his own problem here in America. He was interested only in making white people realize what dastards they were in denying him equal economic opportunities or in lynching him upon the slightest provocation. This, as has been said, was all right for a certain period, and the journalists of that period are not to be censured for the truly daring and important work they did do. Rather, they are to be blamed for not changing their journalistic methods when time and conditions warranted such a change, and for doing nothing else but preaching and moaning until they completely lost their emotional balance and their sense of true values. Every chord on their publicist instrument had been broken save one, and they continued raucously to twang this, unaware that they were ludicrously out of tune with the other instruments in their environment.

Then came the so-called renaissance and the emergence of the so-called new (in this case meaning widely advertised) Negro. As James Weldon Johnson says in the current issue of *Harper's* magazine: "The Negro has done a great deal thru his folk art creations to change the national attitudes toward him; and now the efforts of the race have been reinforced and magnified by the individual Negro artist, the conscious artist. . . . Overnight, as it were, America became aware that there were Negro artists and that they had something worthwhile to say. This awareness first manifested itself in black America, for, strange as it may seem, Negroes themselves, as a mass, had had little or no consciousness of their own individual artists."

Naturally these new voices had to be given a place in Negro magazines and they were given

space that hitherto had been devoted only to propaganda. But the artist was not satisfied to be squeezed between jeremiads or have his work thrown haphazardly upon a page where there was no effort to make it look beautiful as well as sound beautiful. He revolted against shoddy and sloppy publication methods, revolted against the patronizing attitudes his elders assumed toward him, revolted against their editorial astigmatism and their intolerance of new points of view. But revolting left him without a journalistic asylum. True, he could, and did, contribute to the white magazines, but in doing this almost exclusively he felt that he was losing touch with his own group, for he knew just how few Negroes would continually buy white magazines in order to read articles and stories by Negro authors, and he also knew that from a sense of race pride, if nothing more, there were many Negroes who would buy a Negro magazine.

The next step then was for the artist himself to produce this new type of journal. With little money but a plethora of ideas and ambition he proceeded to produce independent art magazines of his own. In New York, *Fire* was the pioneer of the movement. It flamed for one issue and caused a sensation the like of which had never been known in Negro journalism before. Next came *Black Opals* in Philadelphia, a more conservative yet extremely worthwhile venture. Then came *The Quill* in Boston which was to be published whenever its sponsors felt the urge to bring forth a publication of their own works for the benefit of themselves and their friends. And there were other groups of younger Negroes in Chicago, Kansas City and Los Angeles who formed groups to bring out independent magazines which never became actualities.

This last development should have made someone realize that a new type of publication was in order. The old propagandistic journals had served their day and their generation well, but they were emotionally unprepared to serve a new day and a new generation. The art magazines, unsoundly financed as they were, could not last. It was time for someone with vision to found a wholly new type of magazine, one which would give expression to all groups, one which would take into consideration the fact that this was a new day in the history of the American Negro, that this was a new day

in the history of the world and that new points of views and new approaches to old problems were necessary and inescapable.

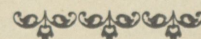
Harlem hopes to fill this new need. It enters the field without any preconceived editorial prejudices, without intolerance, without a reformer's cudgel. It wants merely to be a forum in which all people's opinions may be presented intelligently and from which the Negro can gain some universal idea of what is going on in the world of thought and art. It wants to impress upon the literate members of the thirteen million Negroes in the United States the necessity of becoming "book conscious," the necessity of reading the newer Negro authors, the necessity of realizing that the Negro is not the only, nor the worst mistreated minority group in the world, the necessity of sublimating their inferiority complex and their extreme race sensitiveness and putting the energy, which they have hitherto used in moaning and groaning, into more concrete fields of action.

To this end *Harlem* will solicit articles on current events, essays of the more intimate kind,

short stories and poetry from both black and white writers; the only qualification being that they have sufficient literary merit to warrant publication. *Harlem* will also promote debates on both racial and non-racial issues, giving voice to as many sides as there seem to be to the question involved. It will also be a clearing house for the newer Negro literature, striving to aid the younger writers, giving them a medium of expression and intelligent criticism. It also hopes to impress the Negro reading public with the necessity for a more concerted and well-balanced economic and political program. It believes that the commercial and political elements within the race are just as in need of clarification as the literary element and will expend just as much energy and time in the latter fields as in the former.

This is *Harlem's* program, its excuse for existence. It now remains to be seen whether the Negro public is as ready for such a publication as the editors and publishers of *Harlem* believe it to be.

WALLACE THURMAN.



FOREST FIRE

And I have seen a forest fire;
God, it was an awful thing!
It crept with scarlet tongues,
Fire!
Higher.
It lapped at the soft white rim
Of the dogwood blooms;
It flung orange and black
Scarves to hang in a mocking wrack,
That made green leaves shrivel and curl in
despair;

Pointed ironic fingers here and there
In the cool caverns of moss,
Turning the gold of foliage to dross;
Till the forest, panting in shame,
Gave its virginal beauty to the flame
That left it a stark, black hag
Stripped
Of soul and beauty and love,
Whipped
By the Forest Fire!

ALICE DUNBAR-NELSON

FICTION

Ah! love!
I shall not seek to penetrate
Your webbed gauze
Nor tease my heart
By queries deep,
But hold you tenderly;
The day is evening,
And I must cull my flowers
'Ere dark.

GEORGIA DOUGLAS JOHNSON.

Backstage Glamour

THEOPHILUS LEWIS

HOW folks are great believers in luck. If you ask the average actor to relate the story of his success, if any, the chances are ten-to-one that he will ignore such elements as pluck and perseverance and describe his career as a series of "breaks." By the "breaks" the actor means those unpredictable vagaries of fortune which advance or retard success, and it is the constant anticipation of the breaks which gives show business most of its color and glamour.

The pre-production and between-performance drill of an actor is hard and monotonous work. The neophyte hooper performs labors in rehearsal that would break a stevedore's heart if not his legs. And the latter's pay envelope is fatter and more dependable. Backstage drudgery has driven many a would-be chorus girl back to the laundry. Only a girl that's pure in heart can make the front line. But the stevedore does not live in anticipation of the stroke of luck that will take him off the dock and put him in the office. He knows that if he is ever promoted to straw boss it will be because he demonstrates his ability to handle freight and handle men. On the other hand the fledgling hooper, and the veteran hooper as well, is constantly on the lookout for the big break that will put his name in electric lights. The chorine is buoyed up by the hope that even if the break does not bring her professional preferment it will at least make her look appealing to the eye of some gay dog with a fat bank-roll and a fat head, who will elevate her to the status of a cocotte.

The universal anticipation of the breaks in the show world keeps its denizens, tyros and patriarchs alike, perpetually sensitive and alert. Backstage and in the outside haunts of actors the atmosphere is continuously charged with the enthusiasm of folks overflowing with great expectations. No actor who has not yet made the grade ever has the slightest doubt that Fortune will ultimately smile on him. It never occurs to him that the jade may continue to laugh in his face. Stick around and the break is sure to come, is the universal belief. It may be long delayed, but it is inevitable. If an outsider is bold enough to express a hint of skepticism he is immediately overwhelmed with case examples from the careers of the reigning and departed great, each of whom, it seems, was catapulted

to the peaks, as it were, by a stroke of luck.

A classic break was the incident which veteran performers declare started the team of Williams and Walker on the road to fame. One of the partners of the team, Bert Williams, rose to be the leading American low-comedian of his time. Walker became famous, too, but years before either of them tasted success they were just another pair of actors playing the small-time houses of Chicago and having a hard time keeping in contact with their meals. They were staying in Chicago only because they could not get enough money ahead to pay their railroad fare anywhere else. Their outlook was as black as Bert's face when he appeared in make-up. Instead of getting better their luck got worse until there came a week when they were the only unengaged team in Chicago. Although they did not know it, being out of work just at that time was the break.

While they were waiting for something to turn up a booking agent got a rush order to send an act to West Baden, Indiana. The agent did not think much of the colored team but as it was the only act available he sent it along. It happened that the act was needed to fill a gap in a show being staged for the entertainment of a convention of the Show Managers of America. Oddly enough, the team which had been knocking about the small time houses without creating much comment went over big with the critical audience composed of men who knew, or were supposed to know, the show racket from every angle. But that was only half the break.

During the performance a New York manager received a telegram which informed him that one of his shows in the big city had opened to a cold house. The manager had just seen Williams and Walker and without waiting to see the rest of the bill he went to their dressing room and engaged them for an immediate appearance in New York. Their addition to the New York show changed the production which had been a flop to a sensational hit and "made" the team of Williams and Walker. The rest was gravy.

Sometimes the break for a coming actor is the illness or temperamental disposition of some reigning star. Florence Mills got a chance to appear before a Broadway audience as a result of a disagreement between the man-

agement of "Shuffle Along" and the leading lady. Daniel Haynes, who had never been on the stage before, was given a leading role when Charles Gilpin fell ill three days before the opening. The play, "The Inside of the Cup," was short lived; but it gave Haynes his hour in the limelight. Subsequently he was given the leading male role in "Earth," a play which had a longer run, and still later he appeared in "Rang Tang." Recently he understudied Jules Bledsoe in "Show Boat." At present he is working for King Vidor in "Halleluiah," the first colored talking picture.

Frank Wilson, who plays the title role in "Porgy," was also the beneficiary of a star's fit of temperament. The play was "In Abraham's Bosom" and Wilson was understudying the leading part but entertaining no hope of ever playing it. The play moved from the Provincetown Theatre to more commodious quarters on Broadway and Julius Bledsoe, now "Jules" Bledsoe, chose that time to exhibit his temperament. He failed to show up for a performance, and after delaying the curtain to the last possible moment the management sent Wilson in to take the lead. Wilson's portrayal of the part, according to the critics, surpassed that of the original star and the management decided to worry along without Mr. Bledsoe for the remainder of the run.

Clever actors have been known to make their own breaks. An instance of this kind was the exploit of a colored actor, who, because of the nature of the case, I will call Mr. X. This Mr. X. was in the gallery of a New Orleans theatre when a prominent white actor introduced the Texas Tommy in that town. After carefully noting the climax of each step Mr. X. went home and arranged a Texas Tommy of his own which consisted of all climaxes. A few weeks later both actors were booked in Chicago at the same time. The Texas Tommy, while not new in that city, was still a popular dance, and the white actor got a big hand at every performance. At another theatre a few blocks away Mr. X. was stopping the show.

Backstage romance is another element that keeps show life glowing with color. Every actor who has been in the profession long enough to gather memories includes among them several fetching stories of how professional interest has led to tenderer relations.

Love almost wrecked the old Lafayette Players at the beginning of their career. A leading member of the company, who subsequently achieved national fame, fell in love with one of the least talented women and refused to accept a part for himself unless his inamorata was also given a conspicuous role. The result was that both the star and his flame were forced to sever their connections with the company; but they were married shortly afterward and for years they have lived an ideal wedded life.

The tender passion also united the careers of the late George and Aida Walker. A tobacco company had engaged Williams and Walker to pose for some Cake Walking pictures to be used in advertising their product. Walker, who was without a dancing partner at the time, requested one Stella Wiley to get a girl friend who could dance and meet himself and Williams at the studio. Miss Wiley happened to meet Aida Walker, at that time Aida Reed, and induced her to complete the four-some. Aida earned twenty dollars posing for the pictures and returned home without paying any special attention to George; at least so the story goes.

Some time later the manager of Williams and Walker saw the Cake Walk pictures in a store window. He decided to produce the dance on the stage, but to obtain the benefit of the tobacco advertising he insisted on the same costumes and the same girls. When Walker sent for Miss Reed this time she refused to come. She had been on the stage before and her experience had not been any too pleasant. When his messenger returned with Aida's refusal Walker decided to go see her himself. Several visits were required to persuade her to join the show, and then she agreed to remain with the company only so long as it ran in New York.

The Cake Walk was a huge success. It is said it was the first act in America to be forced to play two houses a night—Coster and Biel's in New York and Beaman's in Brooklyn. Before the New York run of the show was concluded Miss Reed must have changed her mind about not leaving town with the company. Perhaps she made her remaining with the show conditional. At any rate she went with the company on the road—as Mrs. Walker.

What Price Glory in Uncle Tom's Cabin

RICHARD BRUCE

I WAS sitting in at the professional matinee of "Goin' Home." Rialto to the left of me, Rialto to the right. Stock actors. Broadway and the provinces well represented. Numerous and multi-colored representatives from Broadway's sepia productions. Blackbirds' and Porgy-ites. I was bowing to people whose names I could not recall and telling them how much I liked (or disliked) their performances which I *could* remember. A string quintet playing from one of the boxes silenced me. The lights grew dim and the curtain rose.

What Price Glory in Uncle Tom's Cabin?

I watched Madam Du Bois receive, in the absence of her husband, the concentrated praise of all France. I witnessed M. Du Bois, in an Indian makeup, trying hard to shuffle (all Negroes of the type he was portraying shuffle), as a nigger would. I witnessed some superb acting. Not flawless, of course, but excepting the Indian makeup and nigger shuffle of the many times decorated M. Du Bois and the obviously stagey comedy of one Mr. Bailey, a Negro soldier, very creditable acting. I listened with much interest to the unwinding of an excellent plot. And I saw with regret the curtain fall on the first act. I applauded loud and long, until stopped by the hostile eyes of two swart beauties sitting before me. It then occurred to me that the word *nigger* had been used and that I was a Negro. I hastened to the lobby. A cigarette. I met four or five friends and we chatted about plays in general, about this one in particular. I praised the acting of the Southern Major rather highly. I spoke favorably of the honorable M. Du Bois. We were warned that the curtain was about to rise on the second act. There were handshakes and promises to meet at next intermission. As I passed into the theatre I was conscious of contemptuous eyes level at me. I recognized the swart beauties, reinforced now by three gentlemen of color. Indeed, extreme color. Under their stare I may have colored (can I?) for I realized that in my criticisms to my friends in the lobby, I had been guilty of using, numberless times, the words Nigger and Cracker. I really must maintain a better hold on my tongue in the future. It was with some forebodings and dire misgivings that I returned to my seat.

Several times during the second act I caught

myself in time to prevent outbursts of applause for certain bits of worthwhile effort that happened to cloak bits of propaganda; propaganda at least to the propaganda-seeking beauties before me. It would *never* do to applaud, say, the cracker entering the bedroom of the Negro's wife with intent to rape. Thank my stars I *could* applaud the clownings of the Negro soldiers. I did. Then Samba Sar's dance. His gyrations, his whoops, the brandishings of his knife, the steady boom-boom-boom of the upturned wooden bucket used as a tom-tom, all got into me. My foot was pounding (to the evident disgust of my self-appointed censors), pounding time to the intoxicating rhythm. I was worked to a frenzy when the climax was reached. When the major entered from the bedroom insolently buttoning his clothes. I held tight as Du Bois reminded him that France was not New Orleans; when he leveled a gun at the Major with intent to kill and Samba Sar, taking his friend's insult upon himself, lept toward the Southerner with his knife. Sambo Sar was about to settle his friend's debt when Du Bois shot him. Curtain.

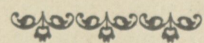
I wandered rather limply to the lobby. I met my friends and we rehearsed the last act. And then I saw those baleful condemning eyes again. Hastily and with a splutter, *nigger* became Negro, and *cracker* was elevated (God forgive me) to the status of Southerner. And still those condemning contemptuous eyes. It was then that I realized the magnitude of my crime. At each intermission the friends with whom I had discussed the play had been *White*. The people before whom I had used the word nigger had been *White*. Well, please God, I could not help it. I *knew* them. I did not know the Blackbirds and things, except as an audience knows its paid entertainers. And the Porgies, well, I saw them much too often to expect a new view in anything from the majority of them. They would like the Negroes in the play and the favorable propaganda. No more. Acting was only incidental. The play would, of course, be bad because the nigger (pardon) Negro, was an handkerchief-head. No views except time worn and familiar prejudices and I wanted new views or at least new angles on old prejudices. And I had unconsciously drifted to the people frank enough to voice their's plainly and boldly.

The eyes still condemned. My reaction was ludicrous. Du Bois became instead of 'soft Negro, loud nigger and the Major fell back in his proper title, cracker. I no longer needed the subconscious corroboration that such was their actual relationship. That it cannot be cracker and Negro because they do not balance. That it cannot be cracker and Negro merely to salve raw wounds. There *are* crackers and there are *niggers* and anyhow. . . . The lights warned us of the last act.

I left the theatre gratified. A good show. Play weak in construction, strong lines, excellent individual psychology and acting. And I was happy. I had dodged the contemptuous eyes.

Happy too soon. After dinner I was talking of the play with certain Porgy-ites, and happened to criticize the performance of one of the Negro actors. I said that, my opinion was that he, having a (to race conscious Negroes) sympathetic part, should have appeared to a much better advantage than he had. That he was

stiff. Fathers protect me. I should have known better. They were all personal friends of his and they were Negroes as was he. I was assailed on all sides. Who was I to call this acclaimed actor (Negro) stiff? Mr. Dale, Mr. Woollcott had not thought so. What did I know about acting. And when I called attention to the fact that the acclaimed gentlemen had possibly been too engrossed criticizing the *acting* in the play to notice him, that, in other words, they may possibly not have considered him worthy of strict criticism, or that possibly being a Negro, which they were not, I might possibly be more aware of the delicate shadings and nuances of the part psychologically and therefore able (maybe) to render a word or two of criticism, that in a word my opinion was mine, I was booed and put to shame. "It had to be me." "Always belittling my own race." "Just like a nigger." Someone shouted from a dressing room. "If you all like that you like 'The Birth of a Nation'." So, after all, What Price Glory in Uncle Tom's Cabin?



MEMORABILIA

EFFIE LEE NEWSOME

There are hoarded in my mind
Little detached memories
That to me have the beauty and value
Of jewels—
A Sonora dove under the limpid drip
Of pepper tree leaves
With tender fringe of blue green rain
That never falls.
A spider web at dawn,
Woven to angles evanescent as wishes
And jeweled with green sweet dew.
The ashy blue green of millet,
The wistful blue green of millet,
The nest that some oriole has left
For the winter's stare;
The wan basket waved by the winds,
Like the door of a deserted cabin.
A deserted cabin
With swelling sorrel broom tides

That sweep toward the untrodden step
And threshold.
The austere grace of Anunciation lilies.
The cold tender purity of a violet
That though low on the earth
Lifts and lifts one,
Purging the soul like velvet fire
The dainty subtlety that Romney
Gave to the mouths of women.
The ineffable epochs
That Leonardo hid there.
Leonardo's rocks,
Leonardo's waters.
Chopin's restless spirit
Stirring in his music,
The detached wing of a butterfly
With silver gems upon it.
The music in the movement of a gull,
Riding, riding, riding!

Two Dollars

By GEORGE W. LITTLE

THE Dew Drop Inn was masked behind an innocent window front. A passer-by would have noticed only a solitary Negro leaning back in a chair against the wall, and a dusty unused bootblack stand. To the right of the chair and its occupant was a door. This was the entrance to the Inn.

The Inn was an L shaped affair. The long part of the L contained the tables, a space for dancing and at the rear a bar. The short part of the L was partitioned off into a shrine devoted to the fickle goddess of chance.

The ceiling of the main room was hung with red and white streamers of crepe paper—dust covered and faded. From the center of the room depended a bowl-shaped frosted light; red crepe paper had been stuffed into the bowl to dim the radiance of the light. An orchestra consisting of a trap drum and a piano occupied the left side of the room. Beyond this and a step down was the bar, a small place about six feet in length. On one end of the counter was a cash register, on the other a barrel.

Happy and Mary arrived when affairs were at their height. Almost every table was filled. The waiters were busy carrying hooch, chicken, ginger ale and pig's feet to the patrons. A plump brown skin girl with protruding front teeth, thick lips and straightened hair sticking out ludicrously, was playing the piano without sheet music for a guide, while at her right a trap drummer with a sloping forehead and skin black as night, rolled a cigar stub between his thick and flabby lips and nodded his head in time with the music, now and then coming in with a roll on the small drum or a thump on the large one as his fancy dictated.

The entertainer was singing "I Wonder Where My Sweetie Is Tonight." She was almost black, her head was small and well shaped. She wore her hair long and caught back in a roll at her neck. She was slightly above medium height and had a figure in which suppleness and voluptuousness were combined to a pleasing degree. Her calves and ankles were exquisitely proportioned—a delight to the eye. She had a voice of strength and clarity. She sang without effort. She moved her body in rhythm with her song. After she had finished singing she lifted the curtain on an exquisite scene of chiffon lingerie and blond hose and danced the Charleston. Her efforts were abet-

ted by exclamations from the patrons such as, "Ah, play wid it!" "Stan' up in there!" "Do that thing!" "Now do it!"

The girls secured a table and looked for Mom. Finally they located her near the orchestra—a dowdy little brown skin woman approaching stout middle age. Her hair was streaked with grey, her hat perched precariously on top of her head as if undecided which way to fall, the pince nez with long gold chain which Mom always affected stood out in austere and dignified contrast to her abandoned gestures. Mom was voicing sweet nothings such as, "I'll love you all over the world! My lover! My big handsome man! My brown-skin papa!" The object of her adoration watched her hat in a fascinated sort of way as she made these slobbering expressions. Having failed to quiet her he was trying to drink himself into a state of unconsciousness.

People at the other tables laughed and commented now and then encouragingly, spurring the love sick lady to further declarations.

The two girls laughed heartily and watched the play. Finally Mom, casting a scorching glance at her escort, said, "Let's go, dear one, where we can be alone."

The man, before replying, drained the half-full half-pint into a glass and gulped it down. "Yes, woman, let's go, for cryin' out loud!"

The crowd laughed only as Negroes can laugh—heartily and unrestrainedly. Mom and her man left.

The waiter came for the girls' order.

"Two straight eights and two bottles of ginger ale," said Mary.

He glided through the tables to the bar behind which presided a baldheaded old man with the face of a mischievous pickaninny, all the more ludicrous because of an artificial eye which stared steadily and unwinkingly when he gazed at anyone.

The order was taken and two half-pints of amber colored fluid were laid flat on the tray—they gave off a pungent and somewhat fetid odor. The old man sighed as he recalled the days of rot gut whiskey and temperance.

"Mary," said Happy, after the second drink, "I'm goin' in and see what that nigger of mine is doin'."



"Ah let him alone. A man don't want no woman draggin' after him all the time."

"Well, I'm goin' anyhow," and she suited her actions to the words.

There were two tables in the backroom. A medium sized wooden table around which were men playing cards, and a pool table. The pool table was the center of attraction. Above it hung a light protected by a conical tin shade painted black. The light illuminated every crevice on the table, then, spent and subdued, was reflected back on the faces of those who crowded about the table. On one side of the table was a man who cut the game. He was seated on a high stool. He was a smooth skinned brown man, his hair cut so close as to give the scalp a shaved appearance. His skull slanted backward, the occiput coming almost to a peak. Below this were two transverse lines of fat which marred the beginning of his neck. He was heavy jowled and loose mouthed. He looked like a brown slug.

Opposite him a raw-boned youth of darker brown, wearing a dirty cap and shirt open at the neck, with shabby shoes and trousers to complete his outfit, caught the dice after each pass was made, called out the numbers and gave each man the dice as his turn came. He also threw the fat man a nickel for each bet, this was the "cut" the house got.

"Five and a tray—his point is eight!"

A Jew rattled the dice and flicked them across the mid line of the table. The speckled cubes raced neck to neck, struck the rubber cushion opposite and came to a stop.

"Five and two—crap! Next! What's the bet—dollar five. The gentleman's point is nine!"

The gentleman was Slim, who had been breaking even for the last two hours. Happy watched him. He was good looking, she thought, and he could love. He was just a spoilt child, that was all. She couldn't turn him loose. If he wins he'll feel better and won't act so tight and mean . . .

"Nine right! Gentleman shoots all!"

The tide had changed. Slim won consistently. Happy dared not speak to him or touch him. The winning went into two figures, then into three. The battle concentrated between Slim and the Jew. Slim continued to win until the Jew called upon the God of his fathers, but that deity was either out or busy or deaf, for Slim continued to hold the dice.

Finally Slim, with his pockets full of crumpled bills left the room. He was drunk and blind with elation.

She followed him shortly afterwards, rejoicing in his good fortune. She would not let know she had been present. She would let him think he was surprising her. The Slovak's two dollars which she had given him had been lucky. . . .

She returned to the cabaret and looked about. Mary was talking to some man who was seated at the table. Slim was nowhere in sight. She accosted a waiter.

"Where's Slim?"

"Just went out this minute," he answered, hurrying past.

Going home to tell me, Happy thought. She hastened homeward. The house could be reached in ten minutes' walk. She would pretend that she had gone to the movies or had just stepped out to the store. Maybe they would tell him she had gone to the cabaret, but she could say she changed her mind. She opened the door and saw Babe lying in the window seat.

"Where's Slim?"

"Damn if I know. I tho't he was over at the Inn."

"Oh, isn't he here?"

"No—"

She went to her room somewhat disconsolate. Well—perhaps he went to get something to eat.

Three hours passed. She heard Mary come in and finally she could stand it no longer. She dressed and walked outside. It was that period just before dawn when even inanimate things seem to sleep. Occasionally the sky took on an evil red glare from the distant mills, and during this time the steel rails of tracks running parallel to the street gleamed and the shabby houses, the uneven paving and all the squalor of the street flashed into view.

Happy saw a cab cross the tracks and pull up to the curb. She walked toward it, half hoping it was he. She reached the corner and halted, drawing back into the shadow of the walk. It was Slim. He was talking to some one in the cab. She could not see who it was. At last the cab pulled away and then the occupant looked through the back window and waved to Slim. It was a woman.

"Tomorrow!" he called after her.

Happy's first impulse was to rush out and catch the cab. She wanted to tear the grinning face to shreds, but she controlled the impulse. Her hate turned toward the man. He was singing to himself as he turned the corner. "A man gets tired, yes, mighty tired, of one woman all the time. . . ."

Happy clinched her teeth and let him pass. She waited long enough to make sure he was in the house, then followed him.

Slim was undressing when she came in. He didn't look at her but crawled into bed and composed himself for sleep. Being wise in the ways of a woman he knew she would soon break the silence. He was not wrong. She tossed her hat in the corner, tore loose her dress and then turned to him.

At last she spoke, slowly and with a forced calm.

"You dirty rat—you've struck me for the last time. I know everything that's happened tonight. You've double-crossed me long enough. You think I'm a fool, don't you? Well I have been. I've treated you too damn nice but now I'm gonna make you pay for it."

Slim laughed contemptuously. He had heard talk like that before. "Aw, dry up woman and sleep it off."

"You think I'm bluffin', don't you?"

She flung herself at him and before he could recover from his surprise her hands were at his throat. Her fingers contracted viciously, the long nails sinking into his flesh. He realized she meant to kill him and fought desperately, striking at her head and body. Her face was close to his—she reached down and sank her teeth into his cheek. He tried to scream but only made a hoarse croaking sound. His struggles became weaker—a body weakened by debauchery and disease was too fragile to withstand such an onslaught—his tongue lolled out and his eyes protruded. She straightened up and looked into his face. The cheek she had bitten was swollen and bloody. The face was dusky, the lips thick and dry. He gave a little moaning sound and coughed, a bloody froth came to his lips.

Her anger had burnt itself out. She had punished him.

"Now I guess you know I ain't bluffin'."

No answer.

"Slim! Slim!!!"

He was not breathing. She felt for his heart. There was no sign of life.

She gave a shriek.

"My God, my daddy's dead!"

She put the bed clothes over the corpse in futile hope of warming it and then as that disfigured face, still wearing a look of stupid amazement at the sudden advent of death, stared up at her she shrieked again and again.

The door opened and Mom, clad in a silk dressing gown which betrayed the devastation that wear and tear of time had wrought on her

figure, rushed into the room in a state of despair. With eyes bleared by her recent debauch she did not at once comprehend the tragedy.

"Why don't you niggers keep quiet, do you want us raided?"

"He's dead—" Happy gasped.

"Dead—dead?" then stark reality caused Mom to wring her hands and give vent to her feelings. "My God, we're all ruined, we're all ruined! Look what you've done! You damned fool! You've got us all in trouble! Well, you'll pay for it, by God you'll pay for it—" she shoved the fainting girl away from her.

By this time the house was aroused and soon all of the occupants were in the room in various states of excitement and undress. The grey-ness of fear was on every face. They stood and stared at Slim, who lay there with the mute indifference of the dead.

Happy rose to her feet from where she had been lying, her face buried in her hands after Mom had shoved her. The paroxysm of rage and grief had passed, leaving the calm of resignation.

"Well, I done it an' I don't give a damn, and as for you—" she turned toward Mom who was moaning furiously—"I ain't asked nothing of you and never intend to. Call the wagon and let me ride. It's all on me—I'm paying for it."

As if in response to her summons there was the noise of a motor without and a pounding on the door. The officer on the beat had been rudely awakened by the shrieks of Happy and sagely realizing that there was safety in numbers, and also being too modest to take credit by handling the situation alone, had called the wagon. Babe opened the door.

"What the hell's the matter—" queried the sergeant pointedly.

"Happy's killed a guy upstairs."

The squad of six men stirred uneasily.

"You needn't be afraid, she just told us to call the wagon."

"Who the hell's afraid, you nigger wench!" he growled. "Put her in the wagon, Mac-Clancy. You watch the back and you the front," he detailed two men, "and the rest of you officers come with me." The intrepid sergeant, followed by his fearless retainers ascended the stairs cautiously. Mom met them in the hallway.

"Oh, sergeant, sergeant, oh, oh!"

"Take care of her, Sweeny!" Sweeny promptly put on handcuffs. The sergeant entered the

(Continued on page 45)

High, Low, Past and Present

WALLACE THURMAN

The Walls of Jericho, by RUDOLPH FISHER (Alfred Knopf: \$2.50)

Quicksand, by NELLA LARSEN (Alfred Knopf: \$2.50)

Adventures of an African Slaver, by CAPTAIN CANOT (Albert & Charles Boni: \$4.00)

I HAD already written a review of *The Walls of Jericho* and was about to send it into the printer when I chanced to open a copy of *The Crisis* for November, and found therein a review of the same work by W. E. B. Du Bois. The following paragraph set my teeth on edge and sent me back to my typewriter hopping mad. Listen to this:

"Mr. Fisher does not yet venture to write of himself and his own people; of Negroes like his mother, his sister and his wife. His real Harlem friends and his own soul nowhere yet appear in his pages, and nothing that can be mistaken for them. The glimpses of better class Negroes which he gives us are poor, ineffective make-believes. One wonders why? Why does Mr. Fisher fear to use his genius to paint his own kind, as he has painted Shine and Linda? Perhaps he doubts the taste of his white audience although he tries it severely with Miss Cramp. Perhaps he feels too close to his own to trust his artistic detachment in limning them. Perhaps he really laughs at all life, and believes nothing. At any rate, here is a step upward from Van Vechten and McKay—a strong, long, interesting step. We hope for others."

The more I reread the above lines the more angry and incoherent I became. I was not so much worried about the effect such a narrow and patronizing criticism would have on Mr. Fisher or on any other of Dr. Du Bois' audience who might take it seriously, as I was concerned for what it tokened for the reviewer himself. Were he a denizen of "Striver's Row," scuttling hard up the social ladder, with nothing more important to think about than making money and keeping a high yellow wife bleached out and marcelled, one would laugh at such nonsense and dismiss it from one's mind. But Dr. Du Bois is not this. He is one of the outstanding Negroes of this or any other generation. He has served his race well; so well, in fact, that the artist in him has been stifled in order that the propagandist may thrive. No one will object to this being called a noble and necessary sacrifice, but the days for such sacrifices are gone. The time has come now when

the Negro artist can be his true self and pander to the stupidities of no one, either white or black.

Anyone with a knowledge of literature and the people who write it should know that when the truly sincere artist begins to write he does not take into consideration what the public might say if his characters happen to be piano movers or his wife and sister. He is drawn toward certain characters and certain situations which interest him and which seem worth writing about. There happens to be no Will Hays or Judge Landis of literature to say: "Nay, nay, dear scribe. Don't you dare write about such and such a situation or such and such a character. They're not nice. What will the best people in the community think?" It happens that most writers have all been able and brave enough to say, "To hell with what the best people in the community think," because they know that generally speaking, the best people in the community do not think at all. The entire universe is the writer's province and so are all the people therein, even lower class Negroes, and if they happen to attract the writer there is no reason why he shouldn't write about them. Nor is it implied here that all Negro writers should write only of "the half world above 125th Street," for such an implication would be just as ridiculous as the one being constantly made by Dr. Du Bois.

The Walls of Jericho is a disappointing book from the standpoint that Mr. Fisher's short stories, published off and on for the past three years, have led one to believe that his first novel would be a more unusual piece of work. And it is unusual in one respect, being the first novel written by a Negro wherein the author handles his theme and writes with enviable ease; the first novel written by a Negro which does not seem to be struggling for breath because the author insists upon being heavy handed either with propaganda as in *Dark Princess* or with atmosphere as in *Home to Harlem*. Mr. Fisher keeps his proportions well, almost too well, and despite what Dr. Du Bois says, does not give us any "ineffectual make believes" when a "better class Negro" appears on the

scene. But after that what have you? Some brilliant bits of authentic dialogue, some biting caricatures, viz; Miss Cramp, but no sustained characterizations or anything vital, truly indicative of the gifts Mr. Fisher so ably displayed in one of the best short stories of Negro life ever written: *The City of Refuge*.

Had this novel been written by some of the lesser lights, or greater ones for that matter, among Negro authors, one's applause would be less constrained. But here is the case where the author lays himself open to criticism not because he has not been good, but because he has not been good enough. However, I am glad that Mr. Fisher has this off his chest, glad that he has proven that it is not necessary for a Negro writer to moan and groan and sweat through a book simply because he is a Negro, and I hope he comes across in the near future with something that will not be a let-down from the man who could write the remarkable short story mentioned above. More, I even hope he takes Dr. Du Bois' suggestion and applies his artistic detachment to his own kind and I hope he includes Dr. Du Bois in his gallery of characters. Then the fun will really begin, and I know of no one better than Mr. Fisher to do this as it should be done.

The author of *Quicksand* no doubt pleases Dr. Du Bois for she stays in her own sphere and writes about the sort of people one can invite to one's home without losing one's social prestige. She doesn't give white people the impression that all Negroes are gin drinkers, cabaret hounds and of the half world. Her Negroes are all of the upper class. And how!

Nevertheless, one has to admit that the performance here is a little less impressive than Mr. Fisher's. Not because of her people or because of the milieu in which they move, but purely because the author seems to be wandering around lost, as lost as her leading character who ends up by doing such an unexpected and inexplicable thing that I was forced to reread the book, wondering, if in my eagerness to reach the end, I had perhaps skipped a hundred pages or so. But no, such had not been the case. Helga does get blown into the gutter and Helga does let herself be carried away by a religious frenzy to the point where she marries a Southern minister and spends the rest of her life having babies. This would have been all right for anyone except the Helga to whom Miss Larsen had introduced us, and even then it would have been all right had the author even as much as hinted that some day her char-

acter might do either the expected or the unexpected. But for the most part all Helga ever does is run away from certain situations and straddle the fence; so consistently, in fact, that when she does fall on the dark side the reader has lost all interest and sympathy, nor can he believe that such a thing has really happened.

Captain Canot was a jolly old soul and in this narrative almost convinces one that the slave trader was a much maligned and noble creature. It wasn't his fault that there was a slave trade. Could he help it that Nordic and Latin tradesmen fomented civil strife among African tribes and bought the vanquished from the victors with brilliantly colored cloth, German glass, English rum and American tobacco? Not at all. He was just an ambitious man out in a hard world trying to make a living and having a good time while doing so. You even suspect that Captain Canot had a good time writing this narrative and can almost hear the reverberation of what Walter Winchell would call his belly laughs, as he thought of the gullibility of the human race in general and of the readers of this book in particular.

This is a book that almost anyone could enjoy, even a bitter twentieth century Negro, for it contains a wealth of information and makes good and interesting reading despite the rather turgid and bombastic style. The drawings by Covarrubias alone are worth the price of the book. If Captain Canot makes the crossing of the slaves in the middle passage seem like a luxurious and interesting event Covarrubias makes one realize just what a brutal and indescribable experience it really must have been, and what is more interesting, his delineation of African types is no less than masterful.

Captain Canot, were he alive now, would probably be a guiding spirit among rum runners, for he would never be content to participate in any but a lawless pursuit. It would please him to exchange shots with the revenue cutter, please him to drop a boat load of liquor into the ocean rather than have it taken by government officers. He did as much with slaves and despite his holy protestations that he was always kind and generous to those with whom he was entrusted, the reader can easily sense that a load of contraband slaves were to him of no more human consequence than would be a load of contraband liquor.

Yet there is no doubt much truth in what he says. Students in this field have long known that no one was more assiduous in selling their brethren into slavery than certain African

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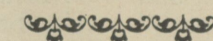
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tribes. It was their means of punishment to the criminal, their means of ridding the tribe of its enemies and of the unfit, their means of making away with recalcitrant parents, husbands, wives and children. And one also cannot deny that there is much truth in the author's statement that the better the slaves were cared for on their voyage the more money they would

draw at the auction block. At any rate slave trading was a profitable and adventurous business and one can hardly condemn a man of Captain Canot's calibre for entering into it with so much zeal and enthusiasm. He at least made the most of his opportunities and we most certainly thank him for this book. Can one say more?



Conjure Men and Black Sirens

H. VAN WEBER

Magie Noire (Grasset, 12 fr.), PAUL MORAND

La Maitresse Noire (Les Editions De France, 12 fr.), LOUIS CHARLES ROYER

I

SEVERAL years ago my father told me of a South Carolina root doctor whom he had known when a boy. This root doctor could cast charms and spells on men and animals alike. Ferocious dogs refused to bite him, ran from him as from the rabies and lost their minds. People who opposed him died in mysterious accidents. Even his son could work wonders. The boy killed chickens by plucking a mysterious wing feather. That was apparently all that he did yet the chickens dropped to the ground fluttering and jumping, then died. Later I met a man who was generally supposed to be a conjurer or root doctor. He was a tall spare man. His skin was the color of a faded walnut and his shoulders were slightly stooped as though continual peering at the ground had curved them permanently. He lived in a large drab-colored house. The magnolia, oak and chestnut trees that grew around the place kept it cool and dark. Here, it was rumored, the white business men of the town came stealthily at night to peer into the future and to secure demoniac aid for their mundane endeavors. Then again in New York I boarded for a while at the home of a woman who devoutly believed in witchcraft and sorcerers. She was always going to some seance or trying out some charm that was supposed to bring good luck. She even read the Bhagavad Gita. All of these things excited my interest, contempt, or curiosity, so it was indeed interesting to find M. Paul Morand writing in "Magie Noire" or Black Magic, a collection of short stories, all on the motif of black magic.

Upon this framework Morand paints vivid and colorful pictures of the Negroes of Haiti,

Louisiana, Charleston, Syracuse of the Ivory Coast of Liberia and of the Soudan. In the introduction to this book Morand tells us that before writing "Magie Noire" he travelled fifty thousand kilometres and visited twenty-eight Negroid countries. This is a large and broad canvas on which he paints his Negroes and it needs must present many different aspects and views; but the thread that unifies this book, that runs throughout the labyrinth of countries and the islands of the sea is the mystic thread of black magic. Nearly all of these Negroes either believe in or practice some occult rite. Thus on a background of picturesque Negro life and folkways, here in America, in Haiti and in Africa, Morand depicts the root doctors, the papalois, the sorcerers, portraying the future, working charms and casting spells.

The conjurer or witch doctor has always played an important part in savage life and here in civilized America, the root doctor, the West African scientist and herbist and the spiritualist, are his prototype. However, patent these practises may have been in a jungle environment, however important psychologically in Africa, South America and the islands of the Caribbean, they are certainly out of mode and impotent nowadays. The witch doctor can't compete with the trader, the missionary and the banker. His charms are futile against the persuasive machine gun and hand grenade. His knowledge of poisons is useless with invaders who live on canned food and his power over the soul comes to naught against the Nordic entrepreneur who neither believes in souls or possesses any.

As long as such papers as the *Negro World*

is filled with advertisements of companies selling black cat bones, lodestones, lucky roots, luck crystals, love rings, lucky oils, lucky salts, Oriental luck bags and such trash, we need a powerful antidote to keep us remembering that these things are useless, that black magic hasn't a ghost of a show with science or as Caruso, a Harlem street speaker, used to tell his tormentors on Seventh Avenue, that "Ignorance and superstition can't compete with intelligence." This book may not be such a powerful antidote, but in several of the stories this effect is reached.

"Congo" is a typical example of the eight short stories in this book. It tells the story of Sophie Taylor, a Creole emigré living in Paris whose nickname is Congo. At one of her fetes, while looking in a mirror, Congo notices a small black spot under her ear. Like many mulattoes she abhors blackness, so she immediately runs to invoke the aid of a voodoo doctor who holds his weird court in a bar. There, due to the influence of black magic, she sees in a vision, her old grandmother, Lizzie Dejoyé in a boat on the Mississippi near Baton-Rouge. Only this grandmother can aid her so she leaves Paris for the States and rushes South only to find her grandmother dead.

Morand's treatment of the funeral certainly would never receive a prize at any Baptist convention because he paints it in all of its ridiculous lights. The minister preaches on the famous text of "Dry bones in the valley." He perspires and pants, imitates the bell of the locomotive, fires questions at his audience, jumps upon a chair, yelps, squeaks and in general makes a fool of himself just as the average Methodist or Baptist preacher does today, especially in the South. When he has settled the state of sister Lizzie Dejoyé's soul and placed it in heaven beyond the reach of any devil, six of the deaconesses fall to the floor with staring eyes and foaming mouths, yelling and shrieking so loudly that they frighten the mules on the farthest plantations. When this emotional frenzy abates, a song of deliverance arises. A hallelujah floats out towards the sky breathing a relief so great, so spontaneous and with a spirit so pure that one would think it sung by prisoners who had suddenly been unchained. With all of her soul Congo shares in the passionate zeal of her black brothers, in the enthusiasm of these primitive folk, who, having skirted the borders of hell, suddenly find for the first time since the world began a god ready to help them. Her veneer of sophistication is stripped off. She forgets Broadway and the

boulevards of Paris. All of the spangle and glitter of her life falls away and she sings with them, a little daughter of Ham, of the race that has been exploited, sold, beaten, martyred, who has not deserved this fate and who can only hope for happiness in death. Leaving the funeral she is drowned while crossing the Mississippi in a ferryboat.

Morand shows in this story that he can really write beautiful and impassioned prose, and if the pious would condemn him for his cynicism in laughing at the antics of these religious zealots, they would have to admit that he only pokes fun at the ludicrous and that behind the wild emotional orgies he senses the terrible travails of body and soul that are mirrored there.

II.

In "La Maitresse Noire" M. Louis-Charles Royer has written a book around two hypotheses that most of us have always either known or believed to be true. First, that Negroes are more passionate than white people, and second that there is a strong attraction between black and white people. Royer has done for French Colonial Africa what needs to be done for Charleston, South Carolina, New Orleans, Louisiana and the United States as a whole. In spite of their different and (according to Anglo Saxon standards) ugly features, their peculiar and distinctive odor, their predilection for pilfering the belongings of others, their lack of intelligence and ambition, the Negro has always had a potent charm for the Nordics. The number of mulattoes in this country eloquently testifies to the antipathy that every Nordic knows exists between the white and black people, and also to the fundamental, ineradicable and unescapable difference that divides the two races.

La Maitresse or The Black Mistress tells a story of the relations that exist in the Soudan between the native Africans and the whites. Robert de Coussan, a young Frenchman with a penchant for gambling on horse races, becomes involved in debt and is sent to the Soudan by his friend, Bourdier, who hopes that in Africa de Coussan will redeem himself and retrieve his money and position.

En route to Bamako he has an affair with a French woman, Mme. Colomba, then later at Bamako he spends an amorous night with Mme. Heliet, the white wife of a cotton planter. But Mme. Heliet likes Africans in general and her servant Gorko in particular so well, that when the young Frenchman leaves, she repeats with Gorko all of the fondling and caressing that she had previously gone through with Robert

and ends by practically raping Gorko. Shades of Vardemann, Blease and Heflin! Whoever heard of such a thing before?

Robert goes through the initial feelings of disgust, antipathy, curiosity, and desire for the African women. On every side he sees white Frenchmen living with these African women much as the white southern planters used to live with their Negro women. He visits the home of his chief, Kervelen and watches his mouso, Matjonda, admires her beautiful eyes, large and calm as the pure water of a lake, her lovely, slender arms, in fact he thinks her ravishing. He listens to M. Bresse, a fellow Frenchman on whose barge he travels to Kambara and who has come to believe that it is the blacks who have the intelligence, opposed to the stupidity of the whites and their sterile activities. "I came to be their teacher," he tells Robert, "to civilize them. Civilization? What a good humbug. We give them our vices without relieving them of theirs." He offers one of his two moussos to Robert for the duration of their voyage and, after a slight protest, Robert shows his wisdom by selecting the one who is less beautiful, but, according to Bresse, more passionate than the other. He causes no tumult to arise in her breast for she responds to his amorous caresses without any apparent emotion but with the heredity science which the Mussulman woman have for satisfying their masters. However, on their last night aboard, when Robert, fatigued and impotent from the love making of the preceeding days is tardy in taking his pleasure, all of her sleeping emotion and lust is aroused and she draws him to her in a vice-like embrace, her thick lips open and a long tremor runs over her entire body. When she retires to her mat where she sleeps, apart from him, he is so ensnared with her charms that he leaps from his bed, throws himself alongside her and holds her in his arms until morning. He finally settles his sex problems by buying Mouk, a beautiful African girl, who is the sister of Aissatou, his friend Ligniere's mouso. Mouk is a virgin with beautiful eyes and the grace and charm of some wild forest animal. Does Robert make love to her with the gentle grace and polished technique of a cultured Frenchman? Not at all. He is so aflame with desire that he pulls her down on the sand behind a bush, tears her garments from her and slakes his desire in a savage fashion. Her sister, Aisston, comes up after they are ready to begin their march anew and pale with emotion shows de Coussan that she has given him a virgin and tells him that he is now her husband,

then she takes from Mouk the white band that she had worn as the symbol of her virginity.

Mouk and de Coussan live happily at Bamako in spite of the attempt of Mme. Heliet to ensnare Mouk in a Lesbian love affair. When his vacation time comes Robert leaves for Paris and falls in love again with his former sweetheart Yvonne. He takes her back to Africa with him but Yvonne's pink and white beauty doesn't find the hot African sun very kind nor does it improve her disposition.

Mouk is living with another Frenchman who loads her with presents and frequently de Coussan meets her standing quietly watching him or passing him with her long undulating walk.

Yvonne becomes more and more jealous and disagreeable as she discovers that Robert has had a love affair with Mme. Heliet and Mme. Colomba and has lived with an African Negro woman. Finally he leaves her in disgust and returns to Mouk. The Black Venus has won back her lover.

One night Gorko brings Yvonne a letter, presumably from Mme. Heliet, that tells her to follow him if she doesn't fear the truth. Gorko leads her to the cabin where Robert and Mouk spend their nights together. With her own eyes she sees her lover lying at ease in the house of this African woman. Yvonne walks home in a daze, lies down on the divan and arouses to feel in the dark room, someone who has touched her with his hand. It is the thoughtful Gorko who has returned to cheer her loneliness. His relations with Mme. Heliet seem to have given him a taste for French women. Gorko is evidently a broth of a boy when it comes to raping for he shows the finished technique of a master. When Yvonne screams in fright he slaps her on the mouth and without more ado makes violent love to her. At first frightened out of her wits, Yvonne, as the savage caresses awaken her passion, abandons herself to the persuasive Gorko and the brute perhaps did not know the pleasure that he had given her. When he leaves she falls into the depths of despair. She has lost Robert, all of her romance is shattered so she leaves the following day for Paris.

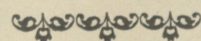
Mouk has changed from the simple, naive girl that she was at first. Experience has given her more sophistication and greater desires. She no longer goes out in her bare feet, but wears fine sandals of red leather. She has developed expensive tastes and in trying to satisfy them Robert falls into debt. At last he disgraces himself when he is caught tampering with the bids in Kervelen's office. He is sent

to Sankoro as a last resort. Here there is no white man for him to plunder or to gamble with. Only the natives and his mousso Mouk. He lives an animal life until he loses Mouk to a passing Frenchman who seduces her with promises of fame and money made tangible by moving pictures of Parisian scenes. Robert follows her to Paris where she is dancing in a cafe. He finds her there and cuts her throat.

This is one of the best written and most colorful of the books that have been written about

colonial Africa. Not since René Maran won the Goncourt prize with *Batouala* have we seen another book that paints with such clarity and fidelity the life of the natives and the French Colonists. It deserves a translation and will probably be used as a model when the first honest and courageous novelist decides to brave the scorn and indifference of the great American public by writing a worthwhile novel on the life of the South.

Now—where is this courageous novelist?



Three Poems

LANGSTON HUGHES.

MAZIE DIES ALONE IN THE CITY HOSPITAL

I hate to die this way with the quiet
Over everything like a shroud.
I'd rather die where the band's a-playin'
Noisy and loud.

I'd rather die in the way I lived,—
Drunk and rowdy and gay!
God! why did you ever curse me
Makin' me die this way?

LADY IN CABARET

She knows
The end of the evening will come,—
It has come before.
And if it should never come again,
Well,—
Just that much more
A bore.

HURT

Who cares
About the hurt in your heart?

Make a song like this
For a jazz band to play:

Nobody cares.
Nobody cares.

Make a song like that
From your lips.

Nobody cares.

Langston Hughes

On Warped Minds

JAMES EGERT ALLEN

A DEMOCRACY depends upon free speech. The degree in which free speech is limited is the degree that designates the limitations of a Democracy. Ancient Athens and antiquated Rome, lacking the ready influence of the printed page, relied upon the forensic gladiators to keep unscathed, the principle of open and unbiased discussion.

How this principle has deteriorated!

In this age of political corruption, racial hatred, bigoted education, tainted religion and Pharisaical society, free speech has been cruelly sacrificed and its exponents mercilessly crucified.

Rarely do we read a book, hear an address, or peruse a journal but that the spirit of narrowness is predominant. It seems that the mind of America is warped. Long years of tradition and standardized teaching have resulted in a one-sided view-point—a single track mind. All colors blend into one before our astigmatic vision. All unexperienced actions are labeled immoral. All new thoughts and ideas are dubbed radical and dangerous.

The pages of *HARLEM* are dedicated to individual freedom. Readers are not expected nor will they be asked to agree with the cullings of persons, high and low in the intellectual, moral, social and economic scale of our Literature. Rather are they asked to view the sayings with tolerance and mutual respect.

When Dean Inge of St. Paul's Cathedral, London shocked the ecclesiastical world with his ideas of liberal religion, why should he be held in contempt by some devout Episcopalian? Recently, Bishop William Montgomery Brown, the modern heretic, was unfrocked because he dared to give vent to his communistic philosophy. Should he be held up to scorn and mockery because ripe experience has taught him to believe in an unorthodox form of Christianity? Why become disgruntled, ye Baptists, because Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick is dynamic rather than immersive in his chosen faith? Has Catholicism affected your feeling for Governor Smith? Election Day may result in Roosevelt being elected Governor of New York State merely because Ottinger comes of Jewish stock.

Over the head of Clarence Darrow, the Negro clergy has hung the Damoclean sword. Perhaps they are still more infuriated since the *Forum* magazine exposed his views on the "Myth of the Soul." Society's elite hold no

brief for Oswald Garrison Villard since his vivid portrayal of their hypocrisy in his recent article, "The Blue Menace" that graces the October issue of *Harpers*. Our own W. E. B. Du Bois typifies a red flag in the estimation of the sainted, tainted D. A. R.

The liberal divine, Dr. John Haynes Holmes has lately given the world his broad attitude on "Marriage and Divorce." A letter to the magazine editor, commenting on this article brought forth this reply:

"Thank you for your cooperation with my request relative to Dr. Holmes' article, 'Marriage and Divorce.'

"So many of the reactions to this article have proved to be intolerant and biased that it is a satisfaction to know there are some who can look at it from its broader aspects, picking out the worthwhile and discarding that which seems to them unsatisfactory."

This extract pictures forcibly and vividly the warped mind of many Americans on marital relationship. In spite of the Renos, the Hollywoods and the ever increasing divorce evils, we are too biased to take the broader viewpoints that might remedy many unfortunate situations.

Because of his firm conviction, Judge Lindsey and his enviable judicial record were violently repudiated by his next door neighbors. Modern methods to regulate birth control mark Margaret Sanger as a moral leper. The sainted Jane Addams of Hull House fame is just as much misunderstood due to her efforts raise unchancy women.

A kaleidoscopic view of the trend of Mr. Average American's mind reveals a sad picture. It presents the basic cause for confusion, ignorance and deviltry. It produces narrow class groups, the closed-door idea of Christianity, the party cliques, the Ku Klux Klan, the fanatics of all descriptions and the slow, staid, impeding conservatives.

The warped mind draws the heavy line of demarcation between North and South, East and West, Catholic and Protestant, Republican and Democrat, Negro and Nordic, Jew and Gentile. To it, fellowship and reconciliation are complete strangers. It knows no creed but the creed of "Ego" and worships no god but the god of self.

Warped minds sent Alexander Meiklejohn from the confines of the East to work out his

educational policies in Wisconsin. They drove Kerlin from his Pennsylvania classroom just as they are driving the heroine of Nella Larsen's *Quicksand* from many southern colleges and institutes today.

What of the future of our civilization? Men like Will Durant, H. L. Mencken, James Harvey Robinson and Charles A. Beard are expressing their opinions frequently. They agree in toto that civilization and progress are handicapped due to the distorted minds of our Republic. Unless a more liberal attitude is assumed, the future looms up before us filled with foreboding and gloom.

An open mind is the first and most essential thing in intellectual development. Tolerance must prevail in this polyglot combination of

American life. If the spirit of individual evolution is to survive, one eye must always be able to envisage the deeds of the other fellow and one ear ever ready to hear the experiences of our brother in white, black or brown.

The joy of life comes from playing the game "fair and square." Warped minds can produce neither fairness nor squareness. They produce only intolerance and confusion.

Look out upon the broad expanse of the vast mental reservation with a free, unbiased, tolerant mind. Then drink in the undreamed-of pleasures, the ecstatic delights, the scintillating charms and the generous reactions that are the inevitable heritages of the sweet-spirited soul that has not defiled itself or "bent its knee before Baal."



A MISSIONARY BRINGS A YOUNG NATIVE TO AMERICA

HELENE JOHNSON

All day she heard the mad stampede of feet
Push by her in a thick unbroken haste.
A thousand unknown terrors of the street
Caught at her timid heart, and she could taste
The city grit upon her tongue. She felt
A steel-spiked wave of brick and light sub-
merge

Her mind in cold immensity. A belt
Of alien tenets choked the songs that surged
Within her when alone each night she knelt
At prayer. And as the moon grew large and
white

Above the roof, afraid that she would scream
Aloud her young abandon to the night,
She mumbled Latin litanies and dreamed
Unholy dreams while waiting for the light.

MR. PRESIDENT!

(Next Time You Call the Meeting to Order We
Suggest That You Make This Very Appropriate
Speech to Your Fellow Members)

LADIES and Gentlemen: The time has arrived for us to be thinking of holding our Annual Ball. There is nothing that will link the chains of friendship together more securely than a social gathering consisting of our own members and their friends. Furthermore these annual fetes provide a means of enriching our treasury substantially thus enabling us to approach our ultimate goal lighter of heart.

May I, as President of this organization, propose that we accept the generous terms offered to us by the Savoy Ballroom whereby we are practically guaranteed a profit and absolutely insured against any chance of losses, regardless of the weather or any other contingencies.

Besides, the Savoy is outstanding in the community as the one place where beauty, luxury, atmosphere and entertainment are of a nature calculated to please the most discriminating person.

I therefore appoint you, and you, and you as a committee of three to go to the Savoy, see Managing Director Charles Buchanan and arrange the details.

The secretary will now call the roll.



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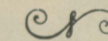
DEEP HARLEM



A STUDY IN SEPIA, BY LEON NOYES

Harlem Directory

Where To Go And What To Do When In Harlem



THERE are four main attractions in Harlem: the churches, the gin mills, the restaurants, and the night clubs. It is not necessary here to define what churches are so we will proceed to give a list of those which attract the largest congregations:

St. Mark's A.M.E., 138th Street and St. Nicholas Avenue.
 St. Philip's Episcopal, 133rd Street, between 7th and 8th Avenue.
 Abyssinian Baptist, 138th Street, between Lenox and 7th.
 Mother Zion, 136th Street, between Lenox and 7th.
 Salem M.E., 129th Street and 7th Avenue.
 Metropolitan Baptist, 128th Street and 7th Avenue.
 St. Mark's Catholic, 138th Street and Lenox Avenue.
 Mt. Olivet Baptist, 120th Street and Lenox Avenue.
 Grace Congregational, 139th Street, between 8th Avenue and Edgecombe Avenue.

And there are innumerable smaller churches and missions, countless spiritualists' rooms, a synagogue, a mosque, and a great number of Holy Roller refuges, the most interesting of which is at 1 West 137th Street.

Gin mills are establishments which have bars, family entrances, and other pre-Volstead luxuries. For reasons best known to ourselves and the owners of these places we will not give the addresses and even were these reasons not personal, there are far too many gin mills to list here. As a clue to those of our readers who might be interested we will tell them to notice what stands on every corner on 7th, Lenox, and 8th Avenues. There are also many such comfort stations in the middle of the blocks.

The best restaurants to go to in Harlem are Tabb's, located at 140th Street and Lenox Avenue, where you can get a good chicken dinner in the Grill Room and have ragtime music while you eat. The Marguerite, on 132nd Street between Lenox and Seventh Avenues, guarantees you a full stomach. Johnny Jackson's at 135th Street and Seventh Avenue; St. Luke's on 130th Street, between Lenox and Seventh. The Venetian Tea Room on 135th Street, between Seventh and Eighth Avenues, and the Blue Grass at 130th Street and Seventh Avenue, are also good bets. If you are broke and want only coffee and rolls or a piece of pie, there are Coffee Pots next to every gin mill or if you should wish vino with your dinner there is the La Rosa on Seventh Avenue near 139th Street.

Among the best known Harlem night clubs are the Cotton Club at 142nd Street and Lenox Avenue; the Lenox Avenue Club on Lenox Avenue, between 142nd and 143rd Streets; Cairo's on 125th Street, between Lenox and Fifth Avenues; the Sugar Cane at 135th Street and 5th Avenue; Small's at 135th Street and 7th Avenue; Barron's at 134th Street and 7th Avenue; Connie's Inn at 131st Street and 7th Avenue; Club Harlem at 129th Street and Lenox Avenue, and the Bamboo Inn at 139th Street and 7th Avenue. Most of these places with the exception of The Cotton Club and Connie's Inn are fairly reasonable and are generally packed, but if you really desire a good time, make friends with some member on the staff of HARLEM and have him take you to Mexico's or to Pod and Jerry's or to the Paper Mill. We warn you that only the elect and the pure in heart are admitted to these places.



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FOR WHOM SHALL THE NEGRO VOTE?

(Continued from page 6)

just so long is the Negro's hopeless political outlook going to continue.

There can be no doubt that dreams of a labor or liberal or other third party in the United States are visionary and unlikely of achievement for many years to come. It is probable that for years to come the only hope which the Negro or any other minority group may have politically rests in the presence in the United States of two political parties of approximately the same strength. Such a condition enables the Negro to trade ballots for justice, doing so in the most unselfish manner. This enlightened selfishness can and will bring worthwhile results as has already been seen in states and cities where Negroes have broken away from blind devotion to the Republican party. It is also becoming less important each year for the Negro and other minority groups to pay much attention to what parties shall control national affairs or who shall be President of these United States. The Negro must continue to make his ballot an uncertain quantity, pay no attention whatever to party labels and vote for men and measures which careful study of records convinces the Negro mean most to him as a race. The choice of members of both Houses of Congress and of state legislatures, and of county and city officials mean much more to minority groups than who shall sit in the White House. In the words of James Weldon Johnson, "It is worth a great deal more for a Negro in Mississippi to help elect the sheriff, the prosecuting attorney, the police judge, the board of education and the various other local officers than it is to help elect the President of the United States."

More intelligence and honesty among Negroes can and will definitely affect the political complexion of the Congress to be elected two years from now and of state and city officials. Out of the election of 1928 there seems likely a shaking if not a breaking of the solid south. The Negro himself, with his new economic, political and cultural strength, must answer the question as to whether or not he is going to remain the one hopelessly backward political group in the American electorate.



HOLES

(Continued from page 6)

was blue-black; one small wisp of cloud was reddish as with a blood-stain, and there was a stain of ink on its ragged edge. God's ink.

I walked slowly across the room to look at

the Thing across the bed. The lids had lifted from the bottomless holes, and my mouth and throat burned as I sank into their swirling, moon-filled depths.

I am almost at the end of this account. The open gas-jet in the fire-place is hissing steadily. There is a daze before my eyes, but I can still see the form across my bed. I do not smell the gas now; I have become used to it. My head is very light. It takes more and more effort to write. I seem to be floating. It has become quite dark. I wonder if she is waiting? I am very tired. I am floating, I—



TWO DOLLARS

(Continued from page 30)

room. Seeing that all was quiet he cast a fierce look at Happy.

"Well, what ya got to say?"

"I done it."

"Yuh did, eh? -Yuh did? Come along, and the rest of you too—" He made a perfunctory examination of the corpse, spat in disgust and hustled them out of the room.

The wagon was filled to capacity. A crowd had accumulated with great rapidity. There was much jostling and chattering and stretching of necks and gaping of mouths. The sergeant himself escorted Happy to the city conveyance and a silence fell on the crowd. They were disappointed, for she was apparently calm and unmoved.

III.

Two Slovaks were walking down the track to work. The older one said, "Those places no good—raise too much hell all the time, eh?"

The younger one sighed reminiscently as he thought of two dollars he had spent the night before. "Well, maybe; I dunno," he replied.

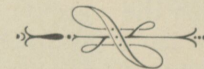


CONJURE MAN

By WILLIAM HILL

Morning, noon and all night thru,
Conjure doctor stirs his brew—
A black bat's wool, a black cat's maw
Herbs, bones, a baboon's paw,
Thrice around the cauldron pass
Magic wand and crystal glass.
Imprecations, vulgar chants—
Than a naked tribal dance.
Now a drum of magic potion,
Agonizing, writhing motion,
Cold, congealing purple hue,
Conjure doctor's fee is due.

Our Contributors



WALTER WHITE is the Assistant Secretary of the N. A. A. C. P. He is also the author of two novels of Negro life, "Fire in the Flint" and "Flight." He has just recently returned from a year of writing abroad.

LANGSTON HUGHES is a senior at Lincoln University. He is the author of two books of verse, "The Weary Blues" and "Fine Clothes to the Jew."

AARON DOUGLAS, the Art Editor of *Harlem* magazine, was formerly a student of Winold Reiss and had a Fellowship last year at the Barnes Foundation. He did the illustrations for "God's Trombones" by James Weldon Johnson.

HELENE JOHNSON, Mae Cowdery, Alice Dunbar Nelson, Effie Lee Newsome, Georgia Douglas Johnson, are among the outstanding Negro poets.

ALISON DAVIS is professor of English at Hampton Institute.

ALAIN LOCKE is professor of philosophy at Howard University. He edited "The New Negro" and "Plays of Negro Life."

ROY DE COVERLY was educated in England and is now living in New York devoting his time to writing.

THEOPHILUS LEWIS is the best known Negro critic of the drama. He was formerly connected with *The Messenger*. At the present time he is busy preparing his first novel for publication.

GEORGE S. SCHUYLER has contributed several articles to *The American Mercury*. He was formerly editor of *The Messenger* and is now the editorial head of a new Negro newspaper syndicate.

RICHARD BRUCE is contributing editor of *Harlem*. At the present time he is travelling with "Porgy" and finding time to write and draw between acts.

H. VAN WEBBER is a graduate of Lincoln University and a linguist. He is devoting his time to writing.

JAMES EGBERT ALLEN is a teacher in the New York City School system. He will contribute a monthly digest of magazine writing to every issue.

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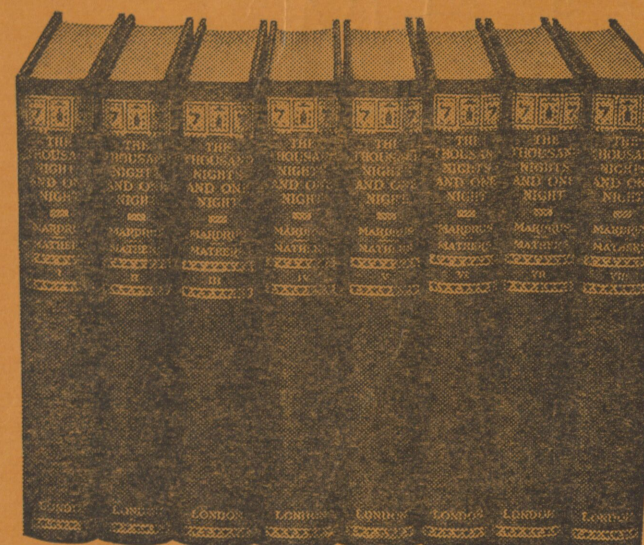
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